

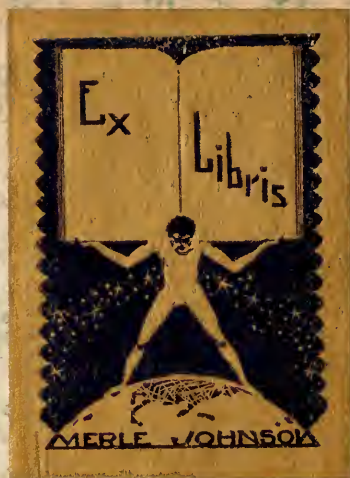
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BY JAMES OTIS 



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BALDY HIGGS THREATENING SAM CARLETON.

THE BOYS' REVOLT.

A STORY OF

THE STREET ARABS OF NEW YORK.

By JAMES OTIS,

AUTHOR OF

"JENNY WREN'S BOARDING-HOUSE," "TOBY TYLER," "MR. STUBBS'
BROTHER," "RAISING THE PEARL," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. P. HOOPER.

BOSTON:
ESTES AND LAURIAT,
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THE BOYS' REVOLT.

THE BOYS' REVOLT.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORGANIZATION.

It was the time when enterprising boys in the boot-blackening business should have been reaping a rich harvest of pennies and nickels, such as would make a good showing on the credit side of the Profit and Loss account.

A foggy morning, with light sprinklings of rain now and then ; not sufficiently stormy to prevent pedestrians from venturing out, but with just enough moisture in the air to destroy the most brilliant polish ever put upon a piece of leather.

At noon the sun appeared from behind the clouds ; the sidewalks were quickly dried, and every inanimate thing, save the boots and shoes which had been carrying their owners through the mud, looked bright and fresh.

On this particular afternoon many gentlemen who remained down town because of business or pleasure,

searched in vain for a boot-black, and not a few wondered why this branch of trade, which was usually overdone, should be nearly at a standstill when it ought to have been the most flourishing.

Two or three young Italians, in small velveteen jackets and wide trousers of the same material, were driven nearly frantic by the many demands for their services; but even while working in such haste that the perspiration from their faces frequently destroyed the hastily applied polish, each and every one made the most severe mental efforts to solve the problem of why their old enemies, the American boot-blacks, had so suddenly gone out of business.

The policemen stationed in the vicinity of City Hall Square may not have been troubled because of the mud on their boots; but they certainly were surprised at seeing a large crowd of boys, each with a boot-black's outfit slung over his shoulder, gathered at the lower end of the park, engaged in noisy discussion.

As audience they had fifteen or twenty loungers who listened attentively to all that was said, and applauded vigorously at every reasonable opportunity.

It was an open-air meeting to which the general public were not invited; but no attempt had been made to prevent the curiously inclined from attending, therefore one could readily learn the following facts:—

Baldy Higgs, a small, freckled faced boy with closely cropped hair, was the master-spirit of the gathering.

It is but a simple act of justice to say that his original name was Archibald, although so many years had



BALDY HIGGS ADDRESSING HIS FELLOW BOOT-BLACKS.

elapsed since his friends used the first two syllables, he would have hardly recognized it as belonging to himself.

That he had called his brother laborers together very much to the detriment of their legitimate business, was made apparent by his opening remarks.

With a park bench for a platform, and hat pushed back on his head that the dilapidated visor might not obstruct his vision, he said in a loud and somewhat shrill tone,—

“ Fellers, we’re ’sembled here — here — to — to — ”

“ Begin over agin, Baldy, you did n’t get that right,” Skinney Jones said in a hoarse whisper, as his comrade stammered and grew so red in the face it was difficult to distinguish the usually prominent freckles.

“ That’s what the man over in Harmony Hall said,” Master Higgs replied, while his audience showed evident signs of impatience for the remainder of the speech.

“ Then he was all wrong. Start once more, an’ go it strong, same ’s you did to me a little while ago.”

Thus encouraged, Baldy pushed his cap nearly a quarter of an inch further back, and began to speak very rapidly, as if afraid of giving the thoughts time to escape from his memory.

“ Fellers, Skinney an’ me asked you to come over here so’s we could all have our rights, an’ this is what oughter be done. Everybody with any style about ’em is joinin’ a Union to get bigger pay, an’ keep other people away. Now us boot-blacks want ten cents for a shine, an’ no *Italians!* ”

"You've struck it for sure, Baldy! We've got no use for them *Italians*, 'cause if they stay round here we'll have to give first-class shines for a nickel; an' that don't pay," one of the audience cried; and Master Higgs appeared delighted at this mark of approval.

"If we act like other folks," he continued, "we can chum together an' put prices way up. What'll the men do if they can't get their boots blacked less'n ten cents? Won't they have to pay it?"

"The *Italians* will shine all they can find for a nickel a pair!" Jippy Simpson cried excitedly.

"That's it! that's jest it!" Baldy shouted. "If every feller here 'grees not to take less'n ten cents, an' to knock the head offer every *Italian* he sees, we can run the whole town. Mike Cassady, up in Harmony Hall last night, said it was these foreigners what was makin' all the trouble, an' a *Italian* is a foreigner. What business have they got to come round shinin'? Now if we wanten have a soft snap, start a Union; let the fellers here join, an' it won't be a day before we'll have every 'spectable boot-black in town with us.'

"But what'll we do then?" one of the party asked anxiously.

"Get ten cents for every shine, an' lick *Italians*. If any feller works for less, fire him right outer the Union, an' thump his head if he tries to do any work. Skinny an' me have fixed up a paper like they did at Harmony Hall last night, an' them as signs it b'longs to the crowd."

Then Master Higgs drew a large sheet of soiled brown

paper from his pocket, and, with a show of dignity befitting a successful public speaker, handed it to Denny Drake, who was standing nearest him, saying as he did so, —

“Read it right out, an’ all hands ’ll know what it says.”

It was a hard matter for Denny to do this; but by dint of perseverance he succeeded, Baldy and Skinney waiting patiently until the task was finished.

Fortunately the original document has been preserved, therefore it is possible to reproduce it exactly.



DENNY READING THE DOCUMENT.

THE BOOT-BLACK'S LABER UNION

No 1.

EVERY FELLER WHAT JINES MUST PAY 5 CENTS A WEEK.
NO EYETALIANS ALOUD.

NO FELLER CAN SHIN BOOTS FOR LESSN 10 CENTS.
CLEANIN MUD COUNTS SAMES A SHIN.

EVERY FELLER MUST LICK A EYETALIAN WHEN HE CAN
KETCH HIM.

THERES GOT TO BE A BOSS SHINER VOTED FOR EVERY
4 WEEKS & HE HAS 2 LOOK OUT SOS 2 SEE
THE THING IS WORKED RITE.

THE BOSS WALKER IS THE FELLER WHAT SNOOPS ROUND
GETTIN MONEY 2 KEEP THE THING GOIN & HUNTIN
FOR BOYS WHAT SHINS FOR LESSN 10 CENTS HE
GETS VOTED FOUR WEEKS & HE HAS TO
LAY FOR EYETALINS SOS 2 TELL
THE OTHER FELLERS WHERE
2 KETCH EM.

NO FELLER CAN SHIN BOOTS FOR A MAN WHAT HAS
HAD A EYETALIN DO IT FOR HIM OR WHAT
HAS PADE 5 CENTS FOR A SHIN.

NO FELLER KAN BY BLACKIN OFFER A MAN WHAT SELLS
TO EYETALINS.

EVERY ONE WHAT BLONGS 2 THIS UNION MUST
DRIVE AWAY EVERY 1 WHAT DONT.

ALL FELLERS HAVE 2 CROSS THER THROTS THAT
THEYLL STICK 2 THIS REGLASHUNS.

The greatest confusion prevailed when Denny finished reading the rules, and it was some time before any one could succeed in making himself heard, save by

his nearest neighbor; but after five minutes of frantic shrieking Jippy Simpson gained the ear of the projector of the scheme, and asked anxiously, —

“What’s goin’ to be done with the five cents every fellow pays once a week?”

“That’s to take care of the Union,” Baldy replied, as he clambered once more upon the bench, that all might hear. “If any feller is sick, the others look out for him so’s he’ll have a good time.”

“But s’posen nobody gets sick?”

“Well, some of it has to go for the Boss Shiner an’ the Boss Walker. You see them two fellers will have all they can do runnin’ round gettin’ other folks to put in money, an’ watchin’ so’s they can tell when the rules are broke. They must keep jumpin’ pretty near the whole time, an’ of course the Union has to look out for ‘em.”

Jippy and several others appeared surprised at this; but after a moment’s silence some one suggested:

“We can’t do much work if we’ve got to lay for *Italians*.”

“That’s it! That’s jest it!” Baldy cried excitedly, dancing with delight that the audience should have led the subject up to this point. “Now, here’s the way we’ll fix things. This afternoon the fellers must work the best they know how, so’s to earn money enough to pay for joinin’. Termorrer we won’t do any shinin’. We’ll go on a strike same’s other Unions do, an’ loaf ‘till every one in town ‘grees that nobody but us can black his boots. It won’t take more’n three days to

clean out the *Italians*, an' then we'll have all we can do at ten cents."

"But if we don't earn any money for three days how 'er we goin' to get somethin' to eat?"

"We'll send the Boss Shiner an' the Boss Walker to the other Unions for money, like folks do when they go on a strike. It'll be lots of fun; the papers will tell all about it, an' the perlicemen will have to march 'round same's they did last summer."

When Master Higgs first began to unfold his plan, some among the audience were disposed to look upon it with disfavor; but now the matter presented a different aspect.

If they could remain idle three days, and during that time be supported by other Unions, a strike would be the jolliest thing possible. To whip *Italians* was sport rather than labor, and hardly a dissenting voice was heard.

There yet remained the shadow of a doubt in Jippy Simpson's mind, however; he felt almost ashamed it should be so, for he asked in a timid, apologetic tone:

"Is it sure you can collect as much money as we want?"

"We'll get it easy enough if you vote for the right ones to be the Boss Shiner an' Walker. Now, me an' Skinney have been talkin' this thing over since last night, an' know jest how it oughter be done. If you want us to take the job, we'll do it, an' in four weeks somebody else can be put in to run the concern."

During a few moments it looked very much as if the

projector of the scheme had been unwise in making this last proposition.

Every member of the audience knew that Baldy Higgs and Skinney Jones were the most indolent boys in the business; both were in debt, and yet none so ready to cease work upon the slightest provocation as they.

It was quite natural that those who were requested to join the Union should ask themselves how two fellows who had been unable to manage their own affairs successfully, could conduct an association with any hope of accomplishing the purpose of the undertaking.

Fortunately, so far as the ambition of Baldy and Skinney was concerned, Jippy Simpson was the only boy who thought it particularly necessary to consider the capabilities of those who proposed to conduct the strike.

The majority of the party had in mind nothing save the injury done them by the Italians, and the anticipated triumph of obliging the public to sue for the privilege of having their boots blackened.

Therefore, after the first surprise at learning that Messrs. Higgs and Jones were candidates for the only offices to be created, had in a measure passed away, nearly every one believed it would be a simple act of justice to give them authority to manage the affairs.

They had conceived the idea, professed to know exactly how it ought to be carried into effect, and, consequently, should be elected.

The more careless boys looked upon the proposed strike as the jolliest kind of a lark, which could not be prolonged more than three or four days, because of the

public's necessities, and to them it was a matter of little moment who were the managers.

Baldy watched the countenances of his audience very closely after making the proposal, and it was not necessary to study long before he understood the matter was virtually settled.

"Them what want to join must come up now an' pay their five cents," he said, assuming that he had been elected Boss Shiner, and speaking authoritatively. "Afterwards they can sign their names an' work 'till night. Termorrer mornin' we'll all meet here an' go for the *Italians*."

Every boy present wrote his name or made some private mark upon the sheet of soiled paper with a new pencil Baldy had purchased for that especial purpose, and the great strike was thus fully inaugurated.

The majority of the signers paid the first week's dues at once; but there were a few who did not have the necessary amount of money, and Master Higgs was careful to impress upon the minds of these delinquents that they must earn and give him five cents before dark, or would be classed with the objectionable *Italians*.

When all had thus become members of the Union, or were accepted as such conditionally upon a prompt payment of dues, Baldy considered it necessary to address them once more; and, after placing the precious document in the inside pocket of his dilapidated coat, he said as he stepped again upon the bench, —

"Now the thing has been started right, an' if we stick together we can run the whole town. I'll go round get-

tin' other fellers to join, an' Skinney will snoop over to Brooklyn to tell the boot-blacks there what we've done, an' bring back the money they're willin' to give. Jest remember that all we've got to do termorrer is to go for the *Italians*; an' if anybody gets hurt, the Union is bound to see him through. This meetin' now shets up 'till after dark, when it'll be open to find out if every feller has paid what he owes."

Strange as it may seem, the business of the city went on after the adjournment much the same as before the meeting was called to order, and the police reserves were not required to patrol the streets, greatly to the disappointment of Master Higgs.

CHAPTER II.

RECRUITING.

IF Baldy Higgs was indolent while conducting his legitimate business, he could not be accused of idling when establishing the Union on what he intended should be a firm foundation.

Perhaps the thought that every new recruit would add another to the number who were pledged to contribute a certain amount each week toward the support of himself and Skinney, caused him to be unusually active, or he may have been suddenly imbued with the idea that it was his duty to labor for the benefit of his companions.

His zeal was very great, no matter from what cause, and before sunset he had obtained the signatures and dues from six boys who did not attend the first meeting.

He also very nearly whipped a small Italian,—the inopportune arrival of a policeman alone preventing him from disabling one of the enemy.

It was time to call the second meeting to order, when Baldy met Sam Carleton, a brother boot-black whom he was very anxious should become a member, because of his industry and general good character.

Sam was coming up Vesey Street at a rapid pace, closely hugging a small flower-pot in which grew a tiny rose-bush, and did not appear inclined to spend much time in conversation, even though so exalted a personage as the Boss Shiner requested his attention.

"Have you gone to farmin' all of a sudden?" Baldy asked, in a particularly friendly tone, as he halted in front of Sam.

"I've been workin' down to the markets, an' trade was so good that I bought this flower for Alice. She's wanted one ever since she was sick; but I couldn't get it before."

Then, having explained as much as he thought necessary, Sam would have pushed on past this acquaintance, for whom he had no very high regard; but Baldy was not so easily thwarted in his purpose.

"Don't be in such a hurry. I've got something big to talk about."

"I know what it is. Jip Simpson told me the whole story a little while ago."

"But I wanter give you a chance to join before it's too late. I'm sure you'll come in if the thing's explained right. Jip means well but don't know how to talk up a Union."

"It won't do any good to tell me, Baldy, 'cause I can't afford to belong; but if you wanter chin, walk up the street. I promised Alice I'd come home by dark, an' she's lookin' for me now."

This was hardly the reception Master Higgs expected to meet with; but the thought of the five

cents which each member must pay caused him to labor very earnestly in enlisting recruits, and he walked on with Sam, explaining what it was proposed to accomplish by means of a Union.

"In the first place, Baldy, the Italian fellers have jest as much right to black boots as you an' me," Sam said, when the Boss Shiner was forced, from lack of breath, to cease talking for an instant. "Then, agin, I'd rather give a shine for five cents than not earn any money at all; an' I couldn't knock off work three days, no matter how much might be made afterwards. Mother's gettin' only a little now, 'cause she has to take care of Alice, an' they need every cent I can raise."

"But the Union 'll see to you while we're loafin'," Baldy said, as he displayed a handful of nickels and pennies. "We've got a pile of money now, an' Skinney's out gettin' more."

"How many fellers have joined?"

"Thirty-one so far, an' we'll have twice that crowd by night."

"Then you've got a dollar an' fifty-five cents?"

"It'll come pretty near that: some of the signers ain't paid yet; but they must, or leave."

"I reckon one or two are fixed like me. I know Jet Blake has to have money right away, 'cause he owes for his board."

"Well, s'posen he does? He'll get twice as much for a shine after the strike is over."

But the Union will have to help him, 'less he's

willin' to go without anything to eat for three or four days. You an' Skinney are goin' to draw money to pay for your livin'; an' how much of that dollar an' fifty-five cents would be comin' to me? I've got to make pretty nigh a dollar a day, an' I don't reckon the fellers will be willin' to give me that, after you've taken what you want. S'posen the strike is n't over in a week?"

"There's no danger of that," Baldy replied confidently; and, realizing he could not enlist Sam by soft words, resolved to try threats. "Do you know if you don't join, all the fellers are bound to drive you away?"

"There is n't one who would do such a thing when I tell them my sister is sick an' I'm earnin' the money for her," Sam replied stoutly; but for the first time he began to think it possible the Union could work him harm.

"They're bound to if you ain't one of us. All the fellers are to do for three days is jump on them as don't b'long to the 'sociation. You see, Sam, we've got to, if we want to get our rights."

"Go to work like a man, Baldy, an' nobody will steal your rights away. I *can't* join, 'cause I must earn money for Alice; an' if any feller tries to stop me, he'd better take care of himself."

"Stick it out that way if you can, Sam Carleton, an' see where you'll fetch up!" Master Higgs cried angrily as he came to a halt, and his companion continued on alone. "If you get a single job termorrer

it'll be 'cause you're stronger'n the whole crowd of us."

Then, after shaking his fist menacingly, the Boss Shiner hurried off in the direction of City Hall park to meet those who were bent on bettering the condition of their fellow boot-blacks according to Baldy Higgs's and Skinney Jones's views.

He found every member of the newly formed Union at the rendezvous awaiting his coming, and the business of the evening was begun without delay.

The most important portion of the work was to collect the remainder of the dues; and this was done quickly, for each delinquent had taken especial care to provide himself with the necessary amount.

Two more boys were allowed to sign the brown paper, after which the presiding officer announced that the association had thirty-three members, and a cash capital of one dollar and sixty-five cents, less a dime advanced the Boss Walker for expenses to Brooklyn.

"Did Skinney spend all that money jest to go over there?" Jippy Simpson asked anxiously; but before Baldy could reply, the second officer was seen coming at full speed toward the park, —

"How'd you make out?" Master Higgs cried while the tardy member was yet some distance away; and Skinney shouted triumphantly, —

"I got some money, an' termorrer I'll have more. The fellers over there are pretty nigh wild about what we're doin', an' I reckon most all of 'em will want to join."

By the time he had ceased speaking, Skinney was in the midst of his brother members, panting severely, like one who had run a long distance.

"How much did they give you?" Baldy asked eagerly; for upon the amount collected from sympathizing fellow laborers the duration of the strike depended.

"Well, you see I didn't get so very much this time, 'cause the fellers was n't posted on what we was doin', or else they'd had a lot saved up; but you'll see it come rollin' in termorrer."

"Let's know what you collected," Jippy cried as he forced his way through the crowd; and Skinney drew from his pocket two pennies, which he held high above his head, that they might readily be seen.

"Have you been all the afternoon chasin' two cents?" Denny Blake asked in surprise.

"I'll get lots in the mornin'."

"How much did you spend goin' over?"

"Well; you see I didn't have any dinner, so I bought four cakes for a cent apiece, an' two on the bridge made six. But you wait 'till the money piles up in the mornin'."

There was a painful pause for nearly a moment, and then Jippy cried, in his shrillest tones, —

"I go in for savin' them two pennies, so's to have 'em framed. They cost three cents apiece, besides what Skinney might have earned if he'd hung 'round here givin' nickel shines."

A burst of laughter followed this remark, and Baldy understood it might be fatal for the Union if the mem-

bers lost confidence in the officers; therefore he took Jippy aside, and said sternly, —

“ You must n't make yourself too smart, Jip Simpson, or you 'll get inter trouble. Skinney did all right; an' if some fellers don't try to be funny, we 'll have as much money as we want.”

Jippy was silenced by the implied threat; but the others were disposed to be merry over the result of the Boss Walker's mission, and the presiding officer realized that some immediate move must be made if he would retain his authority.

Leaping on a bench, he cried, as he waved his arms vigorously, to command attention, —

“ Fellers, don't go to thinkin' that everything ain't straight jest 'cause Skinney only brought back two cents. They are enough to show we 'll get more, an' he says he 'll have plenty in the mornin'. Of course we did n't reckon the money was goin' to pile up the very first thing. Folks must know what we 're doin' before they give much, an' the strike hain't really begun yet. Wait 'till the newspapers tell about it, an' then we 'll have all the cash we can lug.”

The members of the Union, with the possible exception of Jip Simpson, appeared to understand the force of Baldy's argument, and Denny tried to change the subject under discussion, by asking, —

“ What's the first thing we 're goin' to do in the mornin' ? ”

“ That's it! That's jest it ! ” Baldy exclaimed, as he bestowed a smile of approval upon Denny. “ If we git

to fightin' over two cents, the strike won't 'mount to nothin'. Mike Cassady said up to Harmony Hall last night, that in union there was strength, pervidin' everybody did what the officers said. The first thing for all hands to watch after, is the *Italians*. Every one of 'em must be drove off; an' if you can smash their boxes, so much the better. Then we've got to 'tend to Sam Carleton. I wanted him to join; but he would n't, an' said the whole crowd could n't stop him from workin'."

"Well, he has to snoop 'round mighty lively, 'cause his sister's sick," Jet Blake said. "He could n't go on a strike if he wanted to, else Alice would n't have the things the doctor says she needs."

"What's the reason she would n't?" Baldy asked quickly. "Ain't that what Unions are for? Mike Cassady says they're like mothers to yer, pervidin' you pay up sharp. I told Sam we'd take care of Alice; but he did n't say a word. He wants to hang 'round an' shine for five cents; an' he's got to be drove off if we're goin' to make this thing work."

"Then what'll his sister do?" Jet asked.

"She'll be all right, 'cause he won't stick out more'n one day, an' then he'll join. We've got to show we mean business, an' Sam Carleton's the feller to begin on. Me an' Sim Brown, an' Jake Albeck will take care of him while the rest thump *Italians*."

"Are we goin' to do that all day?"

"We'll keep it up 'till noon, an' then meet here to see if any more wants to join. Now skin out of this, 'cause the perlice will be watchin' us if they know we're on a strike."

By this remark Master Higgs intended to adjourn the meeting; but Jet Blake had a question to ask which was of very great importance to himself, and he at once took the floor by calling, —

“Hi! Baldy!”

“What’s the matter now?”

“Did n’t you say this Union was goin’ to take care of all hands?”

“Of course I did; but it can’t ’till we’ve got more money.”

“I’d like to know how I’m goin’ to wait for that? I owe Mother Biddle for two weeks’ board, an’ now she won’t let me come into the house nights, unless I plank down fifteen cents every time.”

“What’s that got to do with the Union?” Baldy asked as he clutched tightly the cash in his pocket.

“Well, if it’s goin’ to be a mother to me, I’d like to have ten cents. I only could give two nickel shines this afternoon, ’cause I had to talk to other fellers ’bout joinin’, an’ I’ve got five cents left.”

“Do you ’xpect to pay in a nickel an’ draw out a dime the very first thing?” Baldy asked in a scornful tone. “You can’t earn any more money for three days, so you couldn’t pay it back; an’ it ain’t likely the other fellers would agree to throw away cash like that.”

“What’ll I do?” Jet cried mournfully. “If I had n’t been helpin’ start this thing I could ’a earned enough to pay Mother Biddle.”

“We ain’t got nothin’ to do with that,” Baldy replied loftily; “when the money begins to come in, we’ll whack up; but ’less you’re sick, you’ve got to wait.”

"I reckon I will be sick if I have to wait three days with nothing to eat," poor Jet said, as he turned disconsolately away; and Master Higgs beckoned to his brother officer, as he called to the others, —

"Don't forget to watch for *Italians* in the mornin'."

"Where are you fellers goin'?" Jip Simpson asked as Baldy and Skinney started toward Chatham Street.

"Up to Conner's lodgin' house."

"What?" Jippy screamed. "Are you goin' to pay fifteen cents apiece for a place to sleep?"

"Of course we are. Do you 'xpect us to snoop 'round with the rest of the gang when any quantity of newspaper men will want to find us before mornin'? How would it look for the Boss Shiner an' Walker of a Union to be sleepin' in a cart, or over to the Home? Mike Cassady says the officers has got to put on style 'cordin' to their positions, an' me an' Skinney will fix that part of it all right."

Jippy was too much astonished to make any reply.

He began to understand there might possibly be a social gulf between a Boss Shiner and an humble member of the association, and murmured to himself as he walked slowly toward the Bowery, —

"I never thought I'd be chippin' in to give Bald Higgs an' Skin Jones a chance to swell! But I *have* done it, an' now I s'pose I've got to hang on while the rest do."

CHAPTER III.

GAINING THEIR "RIGHTS."

THE strikers were out of doors earlier on the morning after the Union was founded than ever before.

It was hardly daylight when the more zealous met at City Hall park; and by the time the sun showed his round face above the housetops, every member of the association, save the two officers, was present, ready to battle for his rights.

There was no unusual excitement apparent in that section of the city, as some fancied would be the case.

The bulletin-boards at the newspaper offices had no flaring head-lines concerning the great strike, and the solitary policeman in the park did not even appear to think it worth his while to learn the cause of the gathering.

The strikers were disappointed because the city still retained its customary early-morning tranquillity; but Jake Albeck soothed them somewhat by saying sagely:

"Wait 'till this thing is found out, an' then see how wild the town will git. I reckon there 'll be more 'n a hundred policemen right in this very spot before ter-morrer mornin'."

"Do you s'pose they 'll 'rest any of us?" Jippy Simpson asked tremblingly.

"Of course not. They would n't dare to take a whole 'sociation. You see it 's different now from what it was when we were only boot-blacks ; we've got the right to parade, and all that kind of thing, jest the same as other Unions."

This put at rest the fears which had arisen in Jippy's mind during the night, and took away a goodly portion of the sting caused by the thought that he had contributed money to enable Baldy and Skinney to "swell."

The officers did not arrive at the rendezvous until nearly an hour after the members were assembled.

Jet Blake, who went supperless to his bed in a wagon, and had not as yet broken his fast, explained the cause of the delay by saying :—

"They 're tryin' to eat all the funds. I reckon they've ordered a high old spread up at some toney saloon, an' are gittin' away with it."

Possibly the others of the party believed the officers were living rather extravagantly on money belonging to the Union ; but no one gave words to the thought, for, now that the strike had really begun, all realized it was not the time to find fault with those whom they had elected.

Messrs. Higgs and Jones entered the park with a great display of dignity.

They had had an opportunity to reflect upon the importance of their positions, and began to understand that it would not be fitting their station to be familiar with those beneath them in the social scale.

"Have you been lookin' 'round for *Italians*?" Baldy asked, much as if surprised that the boys should be idle.

"We was waitin' for all hands, so 's to commence fair," Denny Drake replied.

"Then don't stop here any longer," and Baldy spoke quite sharply. "Sim and Jake are goin' with me to take care of Sam Carleton; an' Skinney will hustle 'round for more money. Now, git to work; an' this afternoon we'll have another meetin'."

The strikers obeyed silently, because they were too much astonished to speak.

Could it be possible that this boy, using such an authoritative tone, was the same Baldy Higgs who had humbly presented himself the day previous as a candidate for office? Then he had pleaded, but now he commanded; and the change in his demeanor was not pleasing.

Perhaps Master Higgs would have been wiser had he not presumed quite so much upon his position; but that was strictly an affair of his own, and no one, save members of the Union, have any right to criticise.

As soon as the greater portion of the association had started off Italian hunting, Baldy gave Skinney whispered instructions, and then beckoned for Sim and Jake to follow in search of Sam.

It was not necessary for them to spend much time in this work.

All knew the boy whom they proposed to discipline would be found in the vicinity of the Vesey Street markets; and there he was seen ten minutes later, industriously engaged blackening boots.

A stranger would almost have fancied he was working

harmoniously with an Italian, for one of that objectionable class was standing close beside him.

"There he is!" Baldy exclaimed vindictively, much as if Sam was a personal enemy; "an' I'll bet he won't get more 'n a nickel for the shine. Now, what we want do is sneak up when he's through. I'll grab his box an' run, an' of course he'll foller. You fellers must give it to him hot while he's chasin' me; an' we'll git him behind some store where all hands can pound him. Don't say anything to the Italian; for after we're through with Sam it'll be time enough to 'tend to him."

An easy matter was it for the young gentlemen who were intent on gaining their rights, to steal very closely to Sam before he became aware of their presence. It was as if he had not believed Baldy would carry into execution the threats made on the night previous, and, therefore, was not on guard against an unfriendly visit.

He paid no attention to anything which was taking place in the vicinity, save as it concerned him in a business way; and the Boss Shiner had every opportunity for beginning the lesson which was to drive this particular boot-black into the sheltering arms of the association.

To wrest Sam's box from him, after he had finished his job and stood waiting for another, was a very simple task; and Baldy started at full speed toward a narrow alley which he believed would afford a sufficient degree of privacy to permit of their disciplining this enemy to the Union without interference.

As a matter of course, Sam followed his property; for he was not a boy who would tamely submit to a wrong,

however many might have inflicted it, and Sim and Jake had ample opportunity to carry out the orders given by their chief.

Each dealt him several severe blows from behind ; but he heeded them not in his anxiety to recover the property, and followed into the trap which had been set.

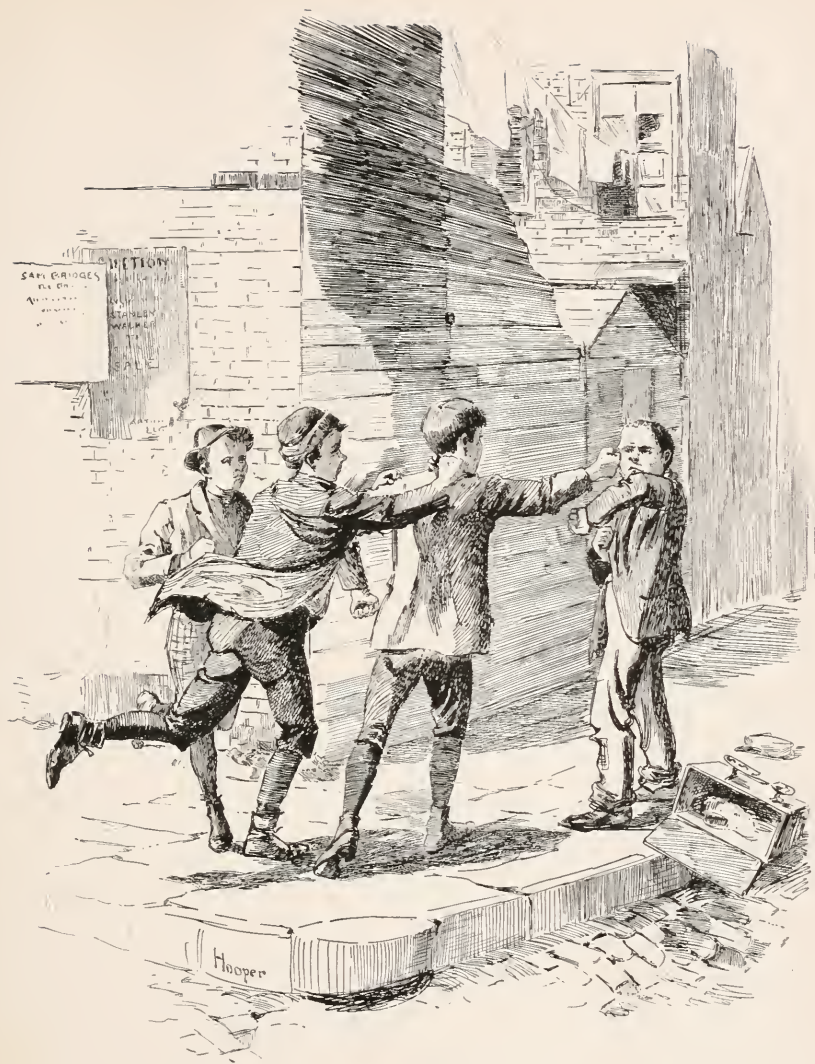
Once in the alley, which was deserted by all save the members of the association and their intended victim, Baldy made a bold stand, swinging the box in front of him viciously, but not quickly enough to save himself from a stinging blow which Sam succeeded in delivering fairly on his nose.

This was the only effective resistance which the victim was able to make ; for in another instant Sim and Jake seized his arms from behind, throwing him heavily to the ground, and during several moments Baldy pounded him without mercy, as revenge for the injury he himself had received.

" Hold him down ! " the Boss Shiner cried vindictively. " We 'll show him whether he can get along without the Union or not ; " and then he added to the prostrate boy, " When you 've had enough of this an' say you 'll join, we 'll let you up."

Sam made no reply.

He had struggled manfully as long as there was a possibility of defending himself ; but when his enemies pinned him to the earth, where he could move neither hand nor foot, he took his punishment in silence, giving no sign of pain, even when Baldy showered blow after blow on his unprotected face.



THE STRIKERS INTERFERING WITH SAM CARLETON.

If it had been the purpose of Master Higgs to wring some cry from Sam, he was disappointed ; and, after beating the boy until his arms and fists ached, he stopped, saying to his companions :—

“ Hold him still, I’ll smash his box, and if this don’t make him sick of not goin’ in with the others for his rights, we’ll serve him the same way every time he shows his nose around here.”

Baldy waited long enough to give Sam a chance to declare himself beaten into the Union ; and since not so much as a sigh came from the compressed lips, he proceeded to pound the box upon the cobble-stones until it was broken into fragments.

Then, throwing the brushes and blacking far down the alley, said as he prepared to retreat :—

“ He knows where to come when he gits ready to join, so let him up, an’ we’ll look for the *Italians*.”

Sim and Jake sprang to their feet, at the same moment they released their hold of their victim, and followed Baldy at full speed toward the street ; but Sam made no effort to pursue them.

Halting at the corner long enough to look back, the three exponents of labor rights saw the beaten boy lying motionless as they had left him, and their faces grew as pale as his.

“ Come on, don’t loaf ’round here,” Baldy said quickly, his red and swollen nose standing out prominently from his otherwise colorless face. “ Let’s git up town before the cops have a chance to ketch us,” and he set the example by running in the direction of Broadway,

not slackening his pace until on the Post-office sidewalk.

"S'pose you killed him?" Jake asked, in a tremulous whisper, when the three came to a halt at what they believed to be a safe distance from the scene of the crime.

"He laid awful still, jest like he was dead," Sim added in a tone of fear; but the Boss Shiner did his best not to appear alarmed.

"You could n't kill a feller jest with your fists," he said, in a voice which was far from firm. "He's had a good poundin', that's all; an' I reckon this'll make the others what did n't join, wish they had. Sam'll be around with a nickel before termorrer mornin'; an' if he acts sorry for what he's done, perhaps we'll git a new box for him. Mike Cassady says you've got to show people what you're made of before they'll know how much good a Union does. Now let's find some Italians."

To act upon this suggestion was simple; but to carry it into execution was quite a different matter.

The other members of the association had evidently been as energetic as the presiding officer, for from the Post-office to the Battery not an Italian could be found. They had been driven from their accustomed places for the time being; but that some of them were yet upon the face of the earth seemed probable, and Baldy led his force up one street and down another in unsuccessful search.

"Now you see what a Union can do," Master Higgs said triumphantly, when, at noon, the committee on

punishment turned their steps toward City Hall park. "I reckon the folks have begun to find out what we mean, an' would n't wonder if we 'd have a whole crowd 'round termorrer coaxin' us to go to work agin."

It surely did seem as if the strike promised to be successful, and the three members were in the very best of spirits as they joined their brother workmen who had already assembled to take part in the noonday meeting.

"What's up? What's the matter now?" Baldy asked sharply as he saw half-a-dozen of the party holding a crying boy to prevent his escape.

"We caught Jet Blake down by Fulton Ferry shinin' for a nickel, an' brought him along to see what's goin' to be done about it."

Baldy looked severe, despite his swollen nose, as he said sternly:—

"Did n't you hear me tell that nobody could work to-day?"

"S'posen I did?" Jet replied angrily. "Did n't you hear me say I had n't nothin' to eat, 'cause I 'd given my money to your blamed old Union?"

"And so you shined for five cents when we was all on a strike?"

"When I joined I did n't 'gree to go without eatin', did I? You an' Skin Jones had a bang-up breakfast with our money, after you 'd been swellin' all night in a reg'lar bed, an' I did n't dare go home."

"What's that got to do with the Union?" Baldy cried. "You oughter had cash enough to lay off on when the strike begun."

"I'll bet I had more 'n you did. Nobody saw you give five cents; an' I don't believe you had a penny, till after the fellers paid up."

Baldy's red nose actually shone with anger at this daring and disrespectful remark. Fortunately the dignity of his position prevented him from answering a boy who could so far forget himself as to make any insinuations against the Boss Shiner, and, turning to Jet's captors, he asked:—

"Did you see him workin' for a nickel?"

"We waited till the man paid, an' then yanked him right along. Here's the money to prove it."

Baldy took the five-cent piece, looked at it scrutinizingly for a moment, and then put it in his pocket,—an act which called forth another burst of anger from the unfortunate prisoner.

"You'll be stealin', Bald Higgs, if you keep that, 'cause it's mine. Of course I shined for a nickel; I ain't had anything to eat since yesterday mornin', an' was n't goin' to starve if I knocked the whole Union to pieces."

"We'll show you what's done to fellers that work when there's a strike," Master Higgs said with a frown, as he rubbed his nose gently. "Did you git his box?"

"Here it is," one of the boys replied as he produced poor Jet's stock in trade.

"Smash it all to pieces, an' throw the brushes in the street." Then, turning to the prisoner, while the others executed his orders, he said, "You're fired out; your name'll be scratched from the paper, an' if we

ever ketch you shinin' boots agin, we'll thump the head offer your shoulders. Now git, for this place won't be healthy much longer."

"Give me my nickel, so's I can have something to eat," Jet pleaded, understanding by this time how useless it was to offer resistance.

"You earned that while you was on a strike, an' it b'longs to the Union. Don't loaf 'round here, or somebody will git hurt."

Jet glanced from one to another for signs of sympathy; but all, save Jippy Simpson, who did not raise his eyes, looked at him unrelentingly.

His box had been splintered into many pieces; his brushes were scattered far and wide; and, hungry, homeless, almost an outcast, he walked slowly away, trying to check the tears which cleansed, in tiny stripes, the dirt from his face.

The Boss Shiner, having thus administered impartial justice, was about to ask his subordinates to report the result of their labors, when Skinney made his appearance, looking flushed but happy.

"I guess you fellers won't kick now 'bout spendin' six cents!" he exclaimed as he made his way to the side of his brother officer. "I've been to Brooklyn agin, an' this time got fourteen cents. Some of the Italians what you've been poundin' come over; an' the fellers are jest about crazy. More'n a hundred of 'em will be here to-night to join; an' they're goin' to start the same kind of a strike if we git through all right."

"What did I tell yer?" Baldy cried triumphantly. "We've only got to stick together if we want to fix things to suit us! Termorrer we'll scoop in them as lives at Jersey City. Mike Cassady says it's better to loaf for nothin', than to work for half price; an' jest see how we're gittin' along when we've laid still only one day!"

The cheering news brought by Skinney drove from the minds of nearly all present any regrets they might have had because of the summary dismissal of Jet, and confiscation of his money.

The strike had been in progress not more than six hours, and yet it already seemed as if the members of Labor Union No. 1 were masters of the situation.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VISITING COMMITTEE.

AFTER the excitement consequent upon the agreeable and, in some respects, startling news brought by Skinney had in a measure died away, Baldy called upon his followers for an account of their proceedings during the forenoon.

Denny Drake answered for those with whom he had been laboring, and his report was most satisfactory to the presiding officer.

“We caught two *Italians* down on Church Street, an’ smashed their boxes. Then we blacked the biggest feller’s eyes, an’ tore pretty near the whole coat off the little one. If a policeman hadn’t come up jest when we was givin’ ’em fits, they would n’t have wanted to walk very far after we got through with ’em. That duffer what hangs ’round Barclay Street come mighty nigh gettin’ the best of us; but we sneaked behind when he thought all hands had gone away, an’ piled him inter the gutter before he knowed what happened. We broke the box over his head; an’ he looked like he’d been under a street-sweeper, when he went up town.”

The spokesman of the second party also reported having whipped three Italians severely, blackened the eyes of two, and destroyed five boxes.

They had been stationed in the vicinity of the Jersey City Ferry, hence their good fortune in finding so many victims.

The third squad patrolled Broadway and Fulton Street, and had not been so lucky as the others, owing to unwarranted interference from the officers.

Two broken boxes and one partially whipped Italian was all they could report as the result of the forenoon's labor.

"If we go on this way, we'll drive every feller what don't belong to the Union outer town," Baldy said approvingly; "an' I ain't sure but we can charge fifteen cents for shines, when there's mud on the boots, or when the leather is new. By the time folks see what we can do, they'll be ready to give anything we ask. Now, every feller must pitch in this afternoon, for we've got the *Italians* scared, an' we'll keep 'em so."

"What's to stop 'em from goin' up town an' shinin'?" one of the members asked, and the presiding officer replied sadly, but with a bright gleam of hope apparent in his tone:—

"Nothin' now; but after we git this part of the city cleaned out, we'll start in up there. When our strike is over, me an' Skinney 'll snoop 'round 'bove Canal Street till every decent feller on the island has his rights. As Mike Cassady says, 'We'll make the rich boot-blacks wish they was poor.'"

"See here," Skinney said earnestly, "there 's one thing that 's got to be 'tended to, if we wanter drive the *Italians* away, though I don't know what can be done. When I was comin' up past the place where we buy our brushes, I saw two yaller fellers lookin' at a set. Now, if shop-keepers are goin' to sell them all they want, it 'll be so much the harder for us."

"You can't stop folks from buyin' things if they 've got the money," Jippy said, with just a tinge of scorn perceptible in his voice.

"Oh, we carn't?" and now Master Higgs grew sarcastic. "D'yer s'pose I 've been chasin' up meetin's without knowin' how to git our rights? We 'll keep that brush-man from sellin' stuff to the *Italians*, or we 'll make him mighty sick. Why, that 's one of the easiest things for a Union to fix."

"Well, I 'd like to know how you 're goin' to do it," Jippy said, growing a trifle more humble as he began to learn the Boss Shiner was perfectly well informed as to his own and others' duties.

"It 'll be done jest as soon as me an' Skinney git dinner. I 'point Sim Brown an' Jake Albeck to make a committee of three, an' go with me to see that man. I 'll do the talkin'; so all they 're for is to back me up. We 'll tell him if he sells brushes to *Italians*, he can't have our trade any longer, an' you 'll see how quick he 'll git down on his knees."

"But if we 're on a strike, an' ain't shinin' any more, our trade don't 'mount to much. Every brush we throw

away makes it so much the better for him, an' p'rhaps he'd rather have things the way they are now."



JIPPY AND THE BOSS SHINER.

"Don't try to be smart, Jip Simpson," Baldy cried angrily. "You think you're up to pretty nigh everything; but before I've been runnin' this Union very long, I'll prove you don't know nothin' at all, an' fix the brush-man too."

Jippy was not disposed to have any altercation then, lest he should find himself dismissed as Jet Blake had been, and walked leisurely down toward Nassau Street, after explaining to those nearest that he was going for something to eat.

"You come back here this afternoon an' chase /Italians!" Baldy called after him sharply, and Jippy replied only by nodding his head,—a manner of answering which caused Master Higgs's anger to increase.

"That feller's growin' too smart," he said savagely; "an' if we don't pull him down a little he'll be runnin' the whole thing. Come, Skinney, let's git dinner, an' then you'd better go over to Jersey City, while me an' Sim an' Jake 'tend to the brush-man."

Several members of the association looked wistfully after the two officers as they adjourned from the open-air lodge-room to the nearest restaurant; but no one ventured to make any remark, lest the displeasure of the chief should be incurred.

Jippy Simpson walked slowly on, without any definite idea of where he was going.

He felt badly because of the way in which Jet Blake had been treated, and angry that he should have done his share toward raising the two most indolent boot-blacks to positions where they could exert so much influence.

Not that he had any idea of leaving the Union.

It numbered so many now, one could well understand what injury it might inflict; and he did not dare to defy it, but felt thoroughly provoked because of not having opposed the scheme.

It was while he was in this frame of mind, paying but little attention to his surroundings, that by the merest chance he saw Jet Blake standing in a door-way, looking as if he was the most miserable boy in the city.

Jet recognized his friend at the same moment he himself was discovered, and his first impulse was to run, for he felt certain the members of the Union would seek to punish him further.

When Jippy called to him in a kindly tone, he ventured to wait until it was possible to learn whether Master Simpson was a friend or foe.

"Haven't you gone to work yet?" Jippy asked, although he knew the question to be a foolish one; and Jet replied mournfully:—

"How can I, without any box or brushes? I'd sell newspapers, an' take the chance of bein' drove away from all the best places, if I had any money to buy a stock; but I ain't got a cent, an' am pretty nigh starved. Of course Bald Higgs an' Skin Jones can afford to have a swell dinner so long as somebody else pays for it."

Twenty-four hours previous, Jippy would have given his opinion of those boys in the most forcible manner; but now he did not think it safe to make any disparaging remarks, even to one of their victims, for fear it should be repeated and work him some injury.

He sympathized heartily with poor Jet, however, and was inclined to aid him, if it could be done secretly.

"I'm sorry for you, old man," he said consolingly, "an' I'd lend yer my box; but they'd be sure to smash it, an' drive me out of the business. If you'll hurry

down to my house before any of the fellers can see you, mother 'll have dinner ready; an' somethin' good 'll turn up in a day or two."

"I don't want'er git yer in any trouble, Jip; but if you only know'd how hungry I am, you would n't wonder I jump at the offer."

"Come on quick, then, an' try not to feel so awful blue; 'cause things are bound to be different pretty soon."

"How can I help feelin' bad?" Jet asked piteously, as he ran along by his friend's side. "I owe Mother Biddle; an' there ain't a single thing I can do to earn money, 'cept lay 'round for a chance to carry baggage, which you know don't 'mount to much. I s'pose if I showed my nose up by the post-office them fellers would give me a thumpin'."

It was very little Jippy could say to console his friend.

He repeated again and again that "something would turn up," which, as he well knew, was an unsatisfactory way to dispose of the matter; but had the pleasure of seeing the ex-striker eat a hearty dinner, and then left him in order to carry out the instructions given by Baldy.

On arriving at City Hall park, Jippy found nearly all the members of the association ready to renew the Italian hunt.

Messrs. Higgs and Jones had not returned from their dinner; but as the orders for the afternoon's work had been given, there was no reason why the boys should remain idle, and they set about the task at once.

Their labor was not so exciting during the ensuing

hours, because enemies were less plentiful. Little time had been necessary to spread the news; and such of the Italian boot-blacks as ventured on the forbidden territory were careful to take to their heels whenever a party of strikers came within hailing distance.

To show how difficult it was for the members of the Union to make very rapid strides toward striking the general public with terror, it is only necessary to say that with from twenty-five to thirty of them patrolling the streets from two o'clock until sunset, only one box was broken, and the owner of this received but little injury.

Jippy was no longer an ardent worker in the cause.

He went with the others, feeling forced to do so, but was not eager to inflict any punishment. Therefore when Joe Dowd, a newsboy of his acquaintance, called excitedly for him to come across the street, after the useless search had been continued nearly two hours, he gladly accepted the invitation, excusing himself to his companions by promising to meet them at the usual rendezvous as soon as his business with Master Dowd should be concluded.

"Well, you fellers are runnin' things pretty high in your strike, ain't yer?" Joe said, when his friend approached.

"What do you mean?" Jippy asked. "Is it 'cause we're chasin' /Italians away?"

"No, that part of it is straight enough; but when you turn to an 'most kill a decent feller like Sam Carleton, what's been workin' hisself 'bout to pieces since his sister was sick, then I think yer Union oughter be torn up."

"I did n't know anything of that!" Jippy exclaimed in surprise. "Baldy said he'd serve him out, but has n't told us if he did it."

"Well, he'd better be careful if he don't want'er git inter trouble. I saw Sam crawlin' along the street this forenoon, lookin' like he was goin' to die; an' of course I asked what ailed him. His cheek is cut way across, both his eyes are swelled up, an' you'd think he'd been gittin' ready for a dime museum."

"Was it Baldy what did it all?" Jippy asked.

"Him an' two other fellers; an' I'd like to serve 'em the same way. Sam's been workin' awful hard; but now his mother says it'll be a week before he can go out doors agin; an' I don't know how they'll git along."

"Did you go home with him?"

"Of course. He could n't hardly see where to walk. They needed every cent he earned; an' you fellers have stopped him from workin' jest 'cause you want ten cents for a shine. Seems to me you oughter think of other folks' rights when you're tryin' to git your own."

"I did n't have anything to do with poundin' him," Jippy cried.

"But you helped git up the Union."

"I wish Bald Higgs an' Skin Jones had tumbled offer the bridge before they started this thing! Say, do you s'pose if I should carry Sam fifteen cents, — that's all the money I've got, — it would do him any good?"

"Of course, 'cause I don't reckon he has any on hand. If you're goin' there, I'll chip in eight cents, an' you can tell him we'll try to raise some more as soon as

I see the rest of the fellers what have n't any bosses over 'em, same 's you boot-blacks have."

Jippy had nothing to say in reply. He was beginning to consider himself personally responsible for the suffering he had seen and heard of that day, and had no excuse to offer. At the same time, he realized he could not disobey the laws of the Union without putting himself in the same position as the one occupied by Jet, therefore it was necessary to bear, with the best possible grace, the yoke he had voluntarily taken up.

"I'll go down there now," he said to Joe, "an' mebbe I'll see you when I come back."

"All right, if Bald Higgs don't have any 'jections to yer talkin' to me, I'm willin'."

Then Jippy hurried away, his face very red because of Joe's last remark, and unmindful of the fact that the strikers were expected to attend the meeting at the usual place before nightfall.

Master Simpson should have been at the rendezvous even then; for he was the only absent member when Baldy returned from "fixing the brush-man."

Of course every fellow was eager to learn the result of his visit, which, if one could judge from the expression of his face, had been very successful; and he took his stand on the bench that all might hear the story.

"We went there an' let the man know who we was," he began, as he pushed his cap back until it would have fallen to the ground had not a fragment of the visor caught on his ear. "He seemed terrible glad to see us, an' asked all 'bout the Union. I give him the straight

story; an' then told him if he sold any brushes to *Italian* boot-blacks we would n't buy a thing more at his store. He said as how 's he did n't want'er make any enemy of sich a powerful — that 's the very word, ain't it, Jake?"

"That 's it for a fact; he said 'powerful 'sociation,' an' —"

"I'll tell the rest myself," Master Higgs interrupted. "He was willin' to stop sellin' to them what don't b'long to the Union, but of course he could n't tell when a *Italian* come there whether he shined for a livin' or not; so all we have to do is to stand a couple of fellers outside the store watchin', an' if anybody goes in what has n't joined, we can sneak behind an' wink at the man. I 'point Denny Drake an' Jake Albeck to 'tend to that part of the work, commencin' termorrer mornin'."

"Well, are we through for to-night?" Sim asked impatiently.

"Them as wants to go home can," Baldy said in a tone of condescension; "but there 'll be a whole raft of fellers over from Brooklyn wantin' to join, an' the more of us that are here the better. Besides, Skinney has n't come back yet."

No one cared to leave until after having a good look at the new members; and the association remained at the meeting-place in anxious expectancy, speculating among themselves as to how many days would elapse before the strike had spread to all the neighboring cities.

CHAPTER V.

THE UNION'S VICTIM.

JIPPY knew exactly where to find Sam Carleton, for he often visited at his home, and no one tried harder to entertain him than Alice.

During the past two months, he had called several times, with little delicacies he thought might tempt a sick girl's appetite, and always liked to think she considered him a good friend.

Now, however, he feared she would look upon him as one of her brother's enemies, and in a certain degree responsible for his troubles; therefore he was decidedly ill at ease when, after climbing three long flights of stairs, he knocked at the door leading to Mrs. Carleton's apartments.

It was Alice's mother who answered his timid summons; and she appeared so pale and careworn that it would have been a positive relief had she boxed his ears soundly, so guilty did he feel.

"Joe Dowd jest told me Sam had been hurt pretty bad, an' I wanted to know how he was," Jippy said hesitatingly.

"Come in and see him, and while you are here I will go for some things Alice needs. I did n't want to leave

the children alone; but now you can be nurse till I return," and Mrs. Carleton ushered him into a tiny room where the Union's victim lay on a narrow bed almost entirely concealed by bandages.

Joe had said Sam was terribly bruised; but Jippy was not prepared for what he saw.

One discolored eye and a pair of swollen lips were all of the boy's features which had been left exposed, and the stained bandages told more eloquently than words the extent of his injuries.

"How are you feelin', old man?" he asked, stepping close by the side of the bed, when Mrs. Carleton left them alone.

"Not very swell," Sam replied, speaking indistinctly. "I could stand the poundin', if I did n't have to stay here when mother needs money so bad."

"I've brought fifteen cents of my own, an' Joe sent eight. He says some of the other fellers will chip in an' try to help you along. I'll work the best I know how to fix things till you can git out agin. But say, Sam, you don't blame me for what Baldy did, jest 'cause I b'long to the Union, do you?"

"Not a bit. You did n't have anything to do with it. Bald Higgs asked me to go in with them, an' I told him jest why I could n't; I did n't think they'd pretty nigh kill me."

"Nobody else would 'a' thought so; but he's a reg'lar sneak, an' wants ter show what he can do. This noon he smashed Jet Blake's box, an' drove him outer the Union, 'cause he shined for five cents to get somethin'

to eat. I'll see you have as much as I can earn, though."

"You must n't, Jippy, you must n't, or they'll serve you out same's they did me," and, in his anxiety, Sam tried to sit upright; but the pain caused by the movement forced him to lie down again very quickly.

"I'll go 'cross town, where they won't see me."

"That would n't do, old man, for the fellers there will drive you away. You've got to stick to the reg'lar places, else you can't do anything."

"I s'pose I can go outer the business without askin' Bald Higgs," Jippy said angrily. "Joe would help me along with newspapers till I got started, an' that's what I'll do if this strike ain't ended mighty quick. How's Alice?"

"She's been awful sick since yesterday. Look in the other room where she is."

Jippy crept softly to the door, and opened it.

He saw a tiny figure lying motionless upon the bed, with a face nearly as white as the coverings, and it was so much like gazing at the dead that he did not stop save for one brief glance.

"She don't look alive," he whispered, returning to his friend.

"An' she's been that same way all day. Oh, Jippy, it pretty near sets me crazy to lay here doin' nothin' when she's so sick! It tickled her when I brought home the rose-bush, an' I was goin' to git some oranges to-day; but—"

Sam ceased speaking; his voice had grown unsteady;



JIPPY AT SAM CARLETON'S.

and, as he covered his eye with a bandaged hand, it was not difficult for the visitor to understand he was crying.

Jippy remained silent several moments, and then asked softly:—

“Do you reckon she'd like it if I went out an' got the fellers to buy her a whole slat of candy?”

“She would n't eat it,” Sam replied, in a trembling voice. “You 're mighty good to wanter help; but mother said all we could do now was to pray. Say, Jippy, do you s'pose you could get off a prayer? I've been tryin', but can't fix the words right. It must be somethin' strong, 'cause you see she's awful sick.”

“I don't know how, Sam,” and Jippy really looked distressed. “I ain't had much to do with God, 'cept once when Jet Blake an' me went over to the Mission chapel, an' I'm 'fraid He would n't pay any' tention to what I said. That Mike Cassady Baldy's allers tellin' 'bout, seems to be mighty smart; how'd it do to git him to start the thing?”

Sam shook his head.

“Mother prays a sight; but she's got so much to do now I'm laid up, I thought we might kinder help out on it. What would you say, Jippy, if you had a sister they said was goin' to die?”

“I reckon I could n't do any better 'n say 'please, God, don't let her.'”

“Then git right down on your knees, an' say it three or four times,—but not too loud, for fear she'll hear.”

Jippy knelt by the bedside, clasped his dirty hands over his eyes, and said slowly:—

"Please, God, don't let Sam's Alice die."

"Give it once more, Jippy, an' try a little louder."

Three times was the petition repeated fervently, earnestly, devoutly, and who shall say that the waiting angels did not carry the prayer to the Throne as swiftly as if it had come to them in more courtly phrase.

"I hope it'll do some good," Jippy said, with a sigh, as he arose to his feet; "but I ain't square enough myself to have sich things count. I'll go now to see what I can do toward earnin' money, an' you may expect me back 'bout dark. Don't git to feelin' bad, 'cause the fellers 'll help out till you 're better; an' there ain't any use worryin' while you 're so much banged-up."

Then Jippy hurried away without waiting for a reply.

As a matter of fact, Sam's request had awakened in him a new train of thought, and he was eager to be alone for a while.

Therefore, instead of going to the City Hall, where he knew some of the Union's members would be found, he went down on one of the East River piers, and his brother strikers failed to see him again that day.

Meanwhile, Master Higgs did not have an opportunity to note the absence of Jippy. He had hardly composed himself to meet the delegation from Brooklyn, when four boys appeared in sight, and Denny Drake shouted: —

"Here they are now!"

"That can't be half of 'em," Baldy said with evident disappointment; "for Skinney told us more'n a hundred was comin'. P'rhaps the others'll be here after a while."

"Is this where the Boot-blacks' Union shows up?" one of the strangers asked, as the four entered the park.

"Yes, an' there's the Boss Shiner," Jake Albeck said, as he pointed toward Baldy, who had assumed what he believed to be a dignified attitude on one of the benches.

"So you fellers are out on a strike, eh?"

"That's what we are. Started this mornin', an' have drove all the Italians outer this part of the town so soon."

"Don't you shine any?"

"No."

"Then we've come over to join."

"You must fix it with Baldy. He's got the papers."

The would-be members marched over to where Master Higgs was awaiting their approach; and he immediately stood up to receive them.

"How many other fellers are comin'?" he asked.

"I reckon we're the only ones. Bill Dempsey said he might try it for a while; but backed out when he found he'd got to pay his own way across the bridge."

Baldy looked disappointed.

This was hardly the "crowd" Skinney had led him to believe was eager to join the Union; but four were better than none, and he did his best to appear as if he had not expected any more.

"Do you want to go on a strike?" he asked, after a short pause.

"Of course we do. What else d'yer s'pose we come over here for? We're tired workin', an' are goin' to lay off for a while. The Union takes care of a feller when there's a strike, don't it?"

"Yes," Baldy said hesitatingly, "it does after it's started; but we ain't gittin' much money in jest now."

"Well, we'll try it two or three days, anyhow."

"All right, you can sign your names, after payin' five cents, same's the rest of the fellers have done."

"Five cents!" the Brooklyn boy cried in surprise. "What's that for?"

"So's we'll have money enough to run the thing. You don't s'pose a strike could be kept goin' for nothin', do you?"

"An' who takes the cash?"

"I do, of course; I'm the Boss Shiner."

"Are all these fellers sich chumps as to chip in five cents a-piece, an' let you hold the stuff?"

It was hard for Baldy to keep his temper down; but after severe mental effort he succeeded sufficiently to say, —

"They have to, if they join."

"Well, I reckon we'll skin back home. All we wanted out of your old Union was a chance to lay off two or three days while somebody else paid the bills, an' if we can't git that much we've no business 'round here."

As the boy ceased speaking he started toward

Broadway, his companions following close behind; and Baldy stood silent and motionless, staring after them in mingled astonishment and rage.

It was particularly unfortunate for Skinney that he should have returned from Jersey City just at this moment; but the Fates so willed it, and he approached his chief in a jaunty manner as he asked, pointing over his shoulder at the retreating strangers:—

“Are them some of that Brooklyn crowd?”

“Some of ’em!” Baldy repeated, in a voice choked with emotion. “Look here, Skin Jones, how many did you say was comin’?”

“I don’t ’xactly remember now; but there was a slat of ’em. More’n half the fellers I saw said they’d join, an’ git up a strike of their own besides.”

“Then you did n’t see very many,” Master Higgs cried angrily. “Them’s the whole gang; an’ all they come for was a chance to loaf while the Union paid for their livin’. If that’s the kind of a Walker you are, we’ll have to choose somebody else what can count. It’s cost you ten cents to collect sixteen, an’ bring in four duffers like them. Now, that’s workin’ hard, ain’t it?”

“I’ve been snoopin’ ’round the best I knowed how,” Skinney whined, the fear of losing his office making him very humble. “If they tell me they’re comin’, an’ then don’t do it, I ain’t to blame.”

“You can find out what they mean,” Baldy cried, determined to vent his ill-humor on some one; “an’ it don’t take all day to talk to eight or nine fellers. I

s'pose you want me to leave the business here an' do your work, don't yer? Now, tell us what you did over to Jersey City, an' let 's have the straight story."

"I saw 'bout twenty," Master Jones replied in a low, meek tone. "Some of 'em thought the strike was a big thing; but a good many would n't even talk 'bout it."

"How much money did you git?"

"Not a cent. Three of the fellers said they 'd come over termorrer an' see you; then, if everything was square, p'rhaps they 'd chip in somethin'."

"That part of it 'll be all right;" and Baldy was considerably mollified because of this apparent deference to himself. "I 'll soon know if they mean business. Do you s'pose anything could be done over to Williamsburg?"

"I 'll try it, if you say the word," Skinney replied humbly.

"All right; go the first thing in the mornin', an' don't come back till you find out jest what they're willin' to do. Denny, you an' Jake must stand in front of that brush-man's place all day termorrer, an' keep your eyes open wide for /Italians. We 'll —"

He was interrupted at this point by the arrival of Sim Brown, who came from the direction of Fulton Street with the wildest excitement apparent on every feature of his countenance.

"There's a slat of Brooklyn fellers down at the Ferry shinin' for a nickel; an' they say they 'll clean out the whole Union if we make any kick about it!"

For the moment Baldy was too deeply agitated to reply.

The perfidy of the Brooklynites, who had professed to sympathize with the strikers, and were now doing them the most grievous injury, wounded his sensitive heart sorely.

One look of reproach he cast at Skinney, who had brought such flattering reports; and then, mentally girding himself for the strife, as he gently rubbed his swollen nose, he cried: —

“Come on, fellers, now ’s the time to show ’em what we can do! If we don’t drive the whole crowd off, the strike is busted!” and he started at full speed toward Fulton Street, followed by as many of the association as could be summoned, Skinney Jones alone showing no eagerness for the coming fray.

CHAPTER VI.

APPARENT IRREGULARITIES.

THE strikers soon learned that Sim had not given a false alarm ; for upon arriving within half a block from the Ferry, the Brooklynites were seen in full force, and evidently driving a flourishing trade.

That they were prepared for an attack was shown by the sentinels posted in every direction ; and when the members of the Union appeared in sight, the intruders made ready for battle.

Baldy was astonished by the demonstrations.

He fancied six or eight fellows might have come over on a raid ; but there had been no idea in his mind that it was a regularly organized plan to interfere with the business of those who were struggling so earnestly for their rights, until he saw the belligerent line drawn up in such a manner as to cut off every approach to the Ferry.

The strikers were now in a position where they must fight or retreat, and the presiding officer was sadly at a loss to know which should be done.

If a conflict was provoked, and the Union came out second best, it would weaken his authority to such an extent that he would be deposed, — a calamity which might necessitate his going to work.

"What'll we do, Jake?" he asked in a whisper. "When we begin there'll be an awful row, an' the perlice may pull some of us in."

"If we don't have it out with 'em now, it's good-by to the Union," Jake replied decidedly. "All the fellers in town would know we backed down, an' then they'd run the thing to suit themselves."

During this brief conversation, the Brooklynites were waiting impatiently for some overt act on the part of their adversaries. Those who had been at work finished quickly, and joined their comrades; while the foremost made disrespectful remarks regarding the abilities of the strikers.

"We'll have to go for 'em," Baldy said, after a moment's hesitation; and he opened the battle by rushing at the nearest trespasser, shielding his sore nose with his arm to prevent further injury to that useful member.

In another instant, the engagement became general, each boy fighting as he chose, and with Skinney far in the rear, making a great deal of noise, but doing very little execution.

Master Jones had a tender regard for his own precious body, and was careful not to expose it to the enemy any more than was absolutely necessary.

The strikers were laboring under a disadvantage in one very important respect. Not being at work they had no boxes with them, and the Brooklynites were fully armed with these very effective weapons.

Had the conflict been prolonged more than five

minutes, it is probable the strikers would have suffered complete defeat ; but it was hardly well begun, when two policemen appeared on the scene, and both armies beat a hasty retreat, a common desire animating the hearts of all, — to escape from the blue-coated guardians of the peace.

Now it was that Baldy showed himself equal to the occasion.

The Brooklynites had been scattered in every direction, while the majority of the strikers fled together ; and when the latter force had put a safe distance between themselves and the officers, the Boss Shiner called a halt.

“ If we work quick we can ketch a lot of them fellers, an' jest about thump their heads off. Snoop 'round back of the market, an' whenever you find one alone, give it to him hot. Be sure to smash their boxes, for that'll make the duffers feel worse 'n a poundin' ; an' when the thing is over, all hands can go home. We'll meet at the park early in the mornin'.”

Then the strikers avenged the insults which the trespassers had heaped upon them a few moments previous.

Four boxes were splintered, as many of the visitors soundly flogged, and the members of the Union sought their respective beds with the belief that they had done a noble work, while at the same time some lengthy strides had been taken toward gaining their full complement of rights.

Skinney Jones was particularly triumphant as he and



THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE STRIKERS AND THE BOOT-BLACKS.

his superior officer walked toward their alleged "swell" lodging-house.

It seemed to him that Baldy had, by this satisfactory ending of the battle, earned the right to fill the highest office in Boot-blacks' Union, No. 1, and, by virtue of the friendship between himself and this exalted dignitary, he was thus assured of his position as Boss Walker.

"There 's no use talkin' about it, Baldy," he said, in a confidential tone, as, having paid the extravagant sum of fifteen cents for the use of a bed, they ascended the staircase of Connor's lodging-house, "the way you 've fixed things to-night, settles it."

Master Higgs felt confident he had displayed great ability on the trying occasion, and praise was very sweet to him, even though it came from his subordinate, who would hardly dare to speak disparagingly; therefore, in order that Skinney might be encouraged to continue the flattery, he asked carelessly:—

"What do you mean?"

"The way you fixed it so's to do them Brooklyn fellers up. You had the bossin' of things there, an' we come out the big end of the horn."

"That's a fact," Baldy murmured modestly.

"Of course it is. S'posen Jip Simpson, or Denny Drake, or any of that crowd, had the handlin' of things, why we'd have got the eyes pounded out of us."

"That's a fact, Skinney," Baldy replied, and, they having gained their room, he closed the door carefully, as if fearing there might be eavesdroppers near. "But there's one thing you don't want to forget, when you an'

me are alone, 'cause the other fellers won't, an' they'll be sure to bring it up some day when they get on their ears 'cause we go to restaurants for breakfasts, an' sleep in this lodgin'-house."

"What is it?" Skinney asked impatiently. "How are they goin' to say anything against what we did to-night?"

"The whole amount of the story is, Skinney, we would have been done up mighty quick if them policemen had n't come along. You see the Brooklyn fellers had the best of it, on account of havin' boxes with 'em; an' I allow we'd been in a pretty tight place if the officers had n't showed up jest as they did."

"I don't see as it makes any difference. We come out ahead, an' that 's all there 's any need of talkin' about. The rest of the fellers won't stop to think how close a shave it was."

"They won't jest so long as things are goin' right, Skinney; but when some of 'em get on their ear, you can make up your mind they'll think of everything. That 's the trouble with tryin' to run a Union like this. Mike Cassady says the worst thing about strikes is, that everybody kicks against the officers of the Union, an' they've got to stand up mighty hard for their rights."

Skinney looked around the room, which, poorly furnished though it was, appeared more luxurious than any he had ever occupied, jingled the few pennies in his pocket, thought of the satisfactory meal which he and Baldy had just eaten, and replied, in a tone of content:

"Well, I reckon *we're* gettin' our rights, anyhow."

"That 's a fact," Baldy added musingly, as he lighted a cigarette; and the Boss Walker noted with considerable envy the fact that the chief of Labor Union, No. 1, had indulged in a full box of these questionable luxuries. "But you never can tell how quick there 's goin' to be a row. Now, here 's the way of it, Skinney; an' you want to kinder keep it in mind, so 's there won't be any chance for a row. While we 're runnin' this thing we 've got the right to have all we want; but a good many of the fellers would n't think so if their 'pinion was asked, an' we must keep it quiet, do you see?"

"Then you 're countin' that we can spend this money the other fellers are payin' in?" Skinney asked eagerly.

"Of course we 've got to buy our grub with it, an' square up for lodgin's, an' once in a while I 'll stand a little more. It 's for me to say how much we shall use; an' you must be mighty careful to turn over every cent you get."

"Of course I 'm bound to do that," Skinney replied, with just a shade of hesitation; "but if you 've got the handlin' of all the money the members of the Union pay in, it seems as if I oughter have a whack at what I collect."

"It don't seem so to me," Baldy replied sharply; "an' I guess if you should make that talk where the fellers could hear you, there 'd be a new Boss Walker elected mighty quick. Mike Cassady says a feller what runs a strike has got to see to everything; an' that 's what I count on doin'. You don't want to try any funny business, Skinney, with what money you collect, remember

that; 'cause if you get me down on you while I'm the boss of this Union, you'll have a pretty hard row to hoe."

"Now what's crawlin' on you? You don't s'pose I'm countin' on doin' anything that ain't jest straight, do you?" Master Jones asked impatiently.

"Well, it won't do any harm for you to remember what will happen in case you should try to swindle me out of what belongs to the Union."

Skinney understood that his superior officer could, by virtue of the authority which he had assumed, reduce the Boss Walker to the ranks without formality; therefore he remained silent under the implication that he would do anything which was not strictly honest, and said meekly:—

"You know me, Baldy, an' you know I ain't such a feller as to go an' do anything you don't like."

"That's all right, Skinney. It won't do any harm for you to know how things stand; an' if you want to hold your job as Boss Walker, you must be pretty careful how you deal with me."

"I allow to be; but I don't reckon either one of us will keep our office more 'n four weeks, as you fixed it; 'cause it strikes me some of the fellers are already beginnin' to kick about our stoppin' at this lodgin'-house, an' think we haven't got any right to do it."

"They'd better not let me hear 'em kick! They'll get served worse 'n Sam Carleton did!"

"But you can't help yourself if there's a new Boss Shiner."

"They've got to 'lect one first; an' I reckon I can fix it so's they won't dare to put up anybody against me, when the time comes," Baldy replied, with a significant gesture which Skinny interpreted as an assurance on the Boss Shiner's part that his power was greater than it appeared on the surface.

Skinny was silent several moments, and then, almost timidly, he asked:—

"I s'pose you'll let me be the Boss Walker jest the same, won't you, Baldy?"

"Of course I will, if you run things the way you oughter."

"I'm willin' to do jest as you say."

"Then it'll be all right, Skinny. You don't want to forget that I'm boss of this thing, an' it's for me to handle the money, an' say what shall be spent. So long's you keep that in mind, I allow we'll get on first class."

"Of course I'm bound to do just as you say; but look here, Baldy, don't you s'pose the fellers will begin to kick if we keep on sleepin' in beds like we was howlin' swells?"

"Some of 'em will, I s'pose; but it won't 'mount to anything. Whoever heard of the boss of a Labor Union livin' 'round same's he used to 'fore he got into office? Why some of them fellers like Jet Black an' Jip Simpson seem to think I can camp in a cart over night, same's they can; but it's different now I'm the Boss Shiner, 'cause it won't be long 'fore the newspaper fellers will be comin' 'round to find out how the strike is goin' "

on, an' they would n't think the Union 'mounted to much if the Boss did n't have a bed to sleep in."

"Of course they would n't," Skinney assented.

"It would n't do for me to go 'round the streets workin', or anything like that, when all these fellers from Jersey City an' Brooklyn, an' wherever else you go, are comin' over to join."

"Of course it would n't."

"An' I've got to have some kind of an office where I can stay, like I do in the park; 'cause I can't be snoopin' 'round anywhere while folks want to find me."

"Of course you can't."

"An' if I've got to run this thing, the strikers are bound to see I get taken pretty good care of. It ain't like as if I was workin' on my own hook. Now, I'm helpin' all hands of 'em to get their rights. If it was n't for me they'd be shinin' for a nickel now."

"Of course they would."

"An' after this strike's been on three or four days, they'll find out things are different from what they used to be."

"Of course they will."

Master Higgs looked sharply at his subordinate, as if fancying he detected a tone of sarcasm in this last assent to his proposition; but Skinney's face betokened only fidelity to his leader, and without further argument the Boss Shiner, whose life during the next four weeks was to be devoted wholly to fighting for the rights of the members of the Union, regardless of the wrongs done to others, betook himself to the rest-inviting bed.

CHAPTER VII.

OPEN INSUBORDINATION.

WHEN the sun rose next morning, and looked down on City Hall park, he saw many discontented faces among those who had assembled to begin the second day's struggle.

With but few exceptions, none of the boys had any money; enforced idleness for thirty-six hours, during which they spent their small hoards freely, had reduced them to a state of penury, and it was not pleasant to think they could earn nothing that day nor the next, unless there should be a decided change in affairs.

Some of the bolder members had already begun to ask each other what the result would be if the strike was prolonged for a week; and those who refrained from saying anything openly were doing a great amount of thinking.

Jippy Simpson was present with his brother strikers. He had eaten a satisfactory breakfast, thanks to his mother, therefore was not hungry, as were the majority of his companions; but he was more eager than any member of the party to earn money, for he had promised to carry Sam some before nightfall.

The officers were late, as usual. On their arrival they had the appearance of having been well fed, and

this was not calculated to make the other members of the Union any more contented in mind; for all knew how these two were being supported.

"Why didn't you come back last night?" Baldy asked sternly, as he halted in front of Jippy.

"I had to find a chance to earn money. I have n't got a cent, an' can't live on nothin'."

"You must n't do any shinin'."

"I know that," was the reckless reply; "an' I know I'd had plenty of cash if this strike had n't come. Now I must snoop 'round huntin' for jobs."

"S'posen there's work for you to do helpin' the Union?" and Baldy gave unmistakable signs of growing angry.

"It don't make any difference if there is. When I joined I 'greed to go on a strike, an' that's what I'm at now; but I did n't promise not to do anything else, for I must have money."

Baldy hesitated an instant. Perhaps he realized that if the bonds were drawn too tightly, all the boys would revolt, and he and Skinney be officers of a Union which had no members. At all events, he replied in a conciliatory tone:—

"We oughter be gittin' in some cash pretty soon, so's we can help them fellers what needs it. If I find Mike Cassady this forenoon, I'll ask him where we stand the best chance of collectin' money. Skinney's goin' over to Williamsburg right away, an' he may have good luck. The fellers from Jersey City oughter be here to-day, an' perhaps they'll chip in; so I reckon we'll have things

fixed by noon. You 'd better go now. Here 's ten cents," Master Higgs added as he turned to Skinney, and that young gentleman started without delay.

"Whater we goin' to do this forenoon?" Jake asked.

"You an' Denny must hang 'round the brush-man's all day. The other fellers will hunt *Italians*, an' I 'll stay here, so's to be on hand when the Jersey City crowd come."

More than one of the boys indulged in a little grumbling before performing the duties assigned. Jippy's outspoken remarks had given them an idea of what might be done if all should act in concert, and to obey Baldy's harsh orders was not particularly agreeable.

No fellow absolutely refused to do as he was bidden; but each went away looking very much as if he would prefer to be blackening boots, even though the price of a shine was only five cents.

Jippy joined the Italian hunters; but it was his intention to give them the slip at the first favorable opportunity. He considered it his duty to work in Sam's interests, and had already resolved to seek advice from Joe Dowd.

Baldy remained in state on one of the park benches, receiving his followers' reports, from time to time, as they caught an enemy, or wished to ask his advice as to the course they should pursue.

It was just the kind of a position he had always thought it would be pleasant to occupy. He had no hard work to perform; twenty or thirty boys were bound to obey his commands; and, what was better

still, every member of the Union was obliged to contribute to his support each week. He felt but one regret, which was that he could not insist on the dues being paid daily.

It was eleven o'clock.

The delegates from Jersey City had not put in an appearance, and Baldy was still communing with himself on the subject of his exalted position, when Jake and Sim entered the park, running at full speed.

"What's the matter?" he asked, rising to his feet quickly. "Have the Italians been tryin' to buy brushes?"

Jake shook his head. He was too nearly breathless to be able to speak immediately.

"Some of 'em may come while you're here."

"Denny's there," Jake managed to say at length.

"What's the matter, then?" and Master Higgs spoke very sharply. "Why don't you talk, instead of standin' there like a jumpin'-jack?"

"Say, where d'yer s'pose Skinney is?" Sim asked, betraying by his face that he had startling news to impart.

"He went over to Williamsburg this mornin', an' I reckon he's there now. Did you fellers come up here to ask me that?"

"If he went, he's got back," Jake said, having by this time so far recovered his breath as to carry on an intelligible conversation. "Sim come down on Fulton Street an' told me he'd seen Skinney on the front platform of a Third-Avenoo hoss-car, smokin' a cheeroot. I started right off to see if it was so, an' Sim follered behind.

The cars got blocked up on Chatham Square, so we caught 'em easy enough, an' there was Skin puffin' away as big as life. I s'pose he collected a pile of money over to Williamsburg, an' now is spendin' it. If that's the way to be a Boss Walker, I'd like a whack at the job myself."

"Are you sure it was him?" Baldy asked, in a tone of mingled incredulity and surprise.

"Of course we are. Don't you s'pose we know Skin Jones when we see him? An' he was smokin', too; so who d'yer reckon paid for that cheeroot an' the ride? He did n't, 'cause he has n't had that much money all at a time for a week."

It was fully a moment before Baldy could make any reply, owing to his great astonishment that one of the Union's founders should be a defaulter; for only by appropriating the funds belonging to the association could Skinney have indulged in such luxuries, except, which was very improbable, he had effected a loan.

"We can't do anything 'bout it till he comes back," Baldy said at length. "He's bound to turn up this noon, an' then we'll know what he's been doin'. You'd better go to work now; 'cause every feller must do all he can to-day."

"I'm tired standin' outside that brush store," Jake said, as he threw himself negligently on one of the benches. "It's mighty hard work, an' somebody else can take a hand at it for a while."

"Do you wanter try it, Sim?" Baldy asked in a friendly tone.

"Not much, I don't! I'll set here till Skinney shows up, for there's no use huntin' *Italians*. We've got 'em scared till them few what come down town keep their eyes open so wide you can't git anywhere near 'em."

This was open insubordination, and Baldy was well aware that if he wished to preserve his authority it was necessary that these two strikers should be forced to perform the duties assigned them; but Skinney's apparent irregularities threatened to weaken his power, and he believed it would be better policy to let them do as they pleased for a time. His one hope was that something might happen which should counteract the effect of Skinney's recklessness; and in this he was not doomed to disappointment.

Sim had but just curled himself up on a bench, preparatory to taking at the same time a sun-bath and a nap, when seven boys entered the park, looking around scrutinizingly, as if in search of something or somebody.

Baldy's heart leaped with joy at the sight of these strangers, and, forgetting the dignity he had thought fit to assume when the delegation from Brooklyn arrived, he went toward them quickly, asking, —

"Are you lookin' for the Union?"

"That's 'bout the size it," one of the boys replied. "A feller what come over to Jersey City yesterday, said you was all out on a strike, an' we oughter help."

"If you will we can git ten cents for a shine jest as easy as winkin'," Baldy said enthusiastically; and then, remembering that he had not introduced himself, he added, "I'm the Boss Shiner, an' was waitin' for you."

We're tryin' to drive the *Italians* away; for, as Mike Cassady up at Harmony Hall says, it's them foreigners what are ruinin' us."

"But can yer do it?" one of the strangers asked.

"Walk 'round an' see," Baldy replied, with a majestic wave of his arm. "We've drove 'em outer this part of the town; an' if you fellers help there won't be one within a hundred miles of here in a week."

"Have you got much money to run the strike?"

"That's it! That's jest it!" Baldy cried; and then added in a confidential tone, "We ain't gettin' the help we oughter have. If there was a strike in Jersey City, or Brooklyn, us New York boys would shovel the cash in; but the fellers don't seem willin' to help us over here."

"Well, we've brought twenty cents, an —"

"Where is it?" Master Higgs cried excitedly.

"Here," the boy said, holding out his hand, and looking surprised at the eagerness displayed. "If you fellers have got any show of makin' the thing work, we'll chip in our share to help it along; but we don't want to throw good money away."

Master Higgs put the pennies carefully in his pocket, and the two refractory members sat bolt upright in their excitement.

It looked as if the strike would be the means of bringing in sufficient money to support them in idleness after all, and they regretted having spoken so sharply to the leading spirit of the scheme.

"I'll take good care it ain't throwed away," Baldy

said emphatically; "an' if you fellers git up a strike, count on our helpin'."

Then, after making many inquiries as to the general condition of affairs, the strangers took their departure, promising to call again next day; and hardly had they left the park when Jake said, —

"P'rhaps I had better go over to the brush-man's, an' I reckon Sim is willin' to look for a few more *Italians*."

"Never mind it," Baldy said, feeling as if he could afford to be lenient, now he had triumphed. "You might as well wait till Skinney comes."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN INVESTIGATION.

ALTHOUGH Sim and Jake were pleasantly surprised by the visit from the Jersey City delegation and the material sympathy shown, they did not forget the terrible suspicion, amounting almost to a certainty, which had come into their minds when they saw the treasurer of their Union on the front-platform of a horse-car, indulging in the expensive luxury of cheroot-smoking.

The visit of the Jersey City boot-blacks had served to show that the strike might yet be such a success that the strikers would be supported in idleness by sympathizers from other cities, and therefore to these two members of the Union there seemed yet greater reason why the apparent irregularities of the Boss Walker should be examined most critically.

They availed, themselves of the Boss Shiner's permission to remain away from their post of duty in front of the brush-maker's store; and yet neither could resist the temptation of leaving the park from time to time as he saw one of his brother strikers in the distance, in order to tell him what of good and evil had come upon the Union since the rising of the sun.

Neither allowed himself to be absent very long at a time, because it was at Baldy's headquarters that the apparently guilty officer would arrive, and also there that other sympathizers with the strike might come.

Sim and Jake were not boys who were willing to miss anything in the way of excitement, and, save for the brief periods when they made short excursions into the streets to acquaint their friends with what had occurred, both remained near the chief officer of the Union.

That evil news flies quickly, was proven on this morning, for each boy who received information regarding Skinney's movements lost no time in telling those at a distance; and the Jersey City delegation had hardly time to gain the Ferry before the majority of the strikers were made aware of the Boss Walker's indiscretion.

Joe Dowd, the merchant in the newspaper line, was personally acquainted with very many of the strikers, and, although not in sympathy with the movement which had been inaugurated, was speedily made aware of the facts in the case, and through him Jet Blake learned of what had occurred.

"I reckon you can go back to shinin' boots pretty soon now," Master Dowd said, as he halted poor Jet, who was walking mournfully to and fro, searching for an opportunity to earn sufficient money to pay for his breakfast.

"What's up?" and Jet's face brightened; for, although he had striven earnestly since daybreak, no

chance for earning even so much as a nickel had presented itself.

"Skinney Jones has been out swellin' hisself, ridin' on hoss-cars, an' smokin' cigars. Do you s'pose he paid for it out of his own money? Of course not. Why? 'Cause he never had enough of his own to do any swellin' on."

"What is it he's been doin'?" Jet asked in surprise, unable to discover from Joe's rapidly spoken words the true condition of affairs.

Master Dowd repeated, perhaps with some embellishments, that which he had been told regarding the Boss Walker's movements, and added in a tone of satisfaction:

"I reckon that's goin' to let Sam Carleton out the trouble you fellers got him into."

"I did n't do anything," Jet replied mournfully. "When the fellers said we could get ten cents for shines, I was willin' to go in, 'cause I'd rather have a dime than a nickel, any day; but who'd thought Bald Higgs could have run things the way he has?"

"That's the trouble with the most of you fellers," Joe said sternly; "you don't do thinkin' enough. I'd like to see the game Bald an' Skin could get me into, 'cause



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I'd know right at the start they was tryin' for a chance to help theirselves. You oughter seen what they was up to when both of 'em elected theirselves officers in the Union."

"But I did n't when I 'greed to join," Jet replied, with a sigh. "Why the thing was n't really started 'fore Bald Higgs said he was the Boss Shiner, an' Skin was Boss Walker. That settled it; you could n't back out then."

"Why not? It would have been a good deal better than to wait for them to smash your box an' steal the money you'd earned. The minute they went to thumpin' Sam Carleton, all you decent fellers oughter left 'em."

"Well, we did n't," Jet said despondently, and added, in a more hopeful tone, "Of course if Skinney's been stealin' money that'll break the thing up, an' there won't be so very much harm done."

"No, I s'pose not," was the sarcastic reply. "I don't reckon it makes any very great difference 'cause Sam Carleton's got knocked out, when his sister is so sick, pervidin' you fellers get through with it all right."

"But I'm goin' to do all I can to help him out. Jip Simpson's workin' for him, an' I'll do the same, if there's any kind of a show of their lettin' me alone."

"Well, see to it that you do," Joe said, with what was very like a threatening gesture. "If I was a boot-black, you can bet I'd take a hand in this thing mighty quick. As it is, I'm going to see Sam through; an' now I reckon you'll have a chance to earn a few nickels, 'cause the members of your Union are gettin' so excited they're bound to stop doin' mischief for a while."

"But I have n't got any box."

"Then shinney 'round an' get one somewhere, while there's a chance;" and Joe hurried away to attend to his own business, for it was doubly important he should have a profitable day's business, in order that he might carry into execution his charitable intentions.

Jet felt decidedly more hopeful after this interview. His brief experience as a striker had been so bitter that it seemed to him as if at least a week must have elapsed since he signed his name to the roll of the Union; and with the thought in his mind that now he would be able to work unmolested, he hurried away, hoping to meet an acquaintance who would loan him an outfit until he could earn sufficient to buy one of his own.

It was as if fortune favored him, at this particular moment; for hardly had he taken leave of Joe when he saw Teddy Grant on the opposite side of the street.

Master Grant had formerly been in the boot-blackening business, and, thanks to his industry and economy, had saved such an amount of money as admitted of his buying a news-stand on Grand Street. That he had prospered in this enterprise could be told from his general appearance as he walked toward his store, laden with the stock in trade which he had been purchasing.

"Hi, Teddy!" Jet shouted, and then, heedless of the apparent danger, darted into the street amid the confusion of horses and wagons, emerging a few seconds later on the opposite side with no injury save what might have been inflicted upon the tempers of the drivers of the vehicles, several of whom had been forced

to pull their horses back very quickly, in order to avoid running down the excited boot-black.

Before Jet could explain to the newsdealer why he had hailed him, the latter said, almost sharply:

"Well, I s'pose you fellers think you're doin' a big thing with your strike, eh? Now how much do you reckon folks care about it? What if you do drive the *Italians* out of town? The men can get their boots blacked in hotels, where they have a comfortable chair and a newspaper to read, and only pay ten cents; while a loafer like Bald Higgs thinks he's goin' to run this town, an' make everybody pay him a dime."

"I guess he don't think so now," Jet said hopefully. "The way things are goin' on, it looks as if the Union was pretty nigh busted;" and then he told Teddy what he had learned regarding Skinney Jones's recklessness in the way of spending money.

"Well, I counted it would turn out something like that," Master Grant said, as he stroked his chin reflectively, "an' 'cordin' to my way of thinkin', Skinney ain't the only one of that crowd what's smokin' cheroots at other fellers' expenses."

"I s'pose you mean Bald Higgs?"

"Of course I do. Why, Jake Albeck told me he was stoppin' up to Connor's lodgin'-house. Now think of it! Fifteen cents for a bed! Baldy never earned fifteen cents in a day since he started in business. Tom McGuire told me both of them snoozers was eatin' a breakfast this mornin' that must have cost twenty cents apiece. Put that with fifteen for a bed, an' its thirty-five cents, with-

out countin' what 'll be put out for dinner an' supper ! I don't know as I could expect any different from you, Jet ; but I did think Jip Simpson would have had more sense than settin' hisself out to support Bald Higgs."

"But I tell you, Teddy, the thing is about gone up now ; 'cause the fellers 'll kick jest as soon as they know what Skinney Jones has done."

"Don't you be so sure, old man. You can bet he 'll have some kind of a story to tell that will shut your eyes ; and Baldy 'll do all he can to help him, 'cause he don't want the thing to bust yet a while. I don't allow you fellers have got out of the scrape by a good deal."

"Well, you 'll see that we have. Say, Teddy, ain't you got an old box you can lend me ? I've got to earn some money to pay Mother Biddle, and, besides, I want to help Sam Carleton."

"I have n't got an old kit as I know of ; but I held on to my good one when I went out of the business. It would n't pay to lend you that, Jet."

"Why not ?"

"'Cause that box with the brushes cost me a dollar and thirty cents, an' I don't want to lose 'em yet awhile."

"You sha'n't, Teddy. I 'll take awful good care of 'em, an' bring 'em back every night."

"I s'pose you would if you could ; but I ain't allowin' you'd have a chance. The box would be smashed, and the brushes thrown away, jest the same as yours was."

"But I don't believe the boys will do anything of that kind now."

"Oh, yes, they will. Bald Higgs will talk the whole crowd over in a little while. This won't 'mount to anything, 'cause the fellers ain't got nerve enough to stand up an' do what they oughter. Baldy 'll lead them 'round by the nose a week or so longer."

"Then you don't want to lend me the box," Jet said mournfully.

"I would, old man, if I thought there was any chance of gettin' it back. I ain't sayin' but you 'd bring it, if you could. You see them fellers ain't through yet, an' you 'll have to hold on a day or two longer, 'less you can get a chance to lug packages."

"It seems like as if I'd held on 'bout as long as I could. I wouldn't have had anything but wind to eat all this time, if it had n't been for Jip Simpson. I feel now a good deal like I was a bladder, an' dryin' up pretty fast at that."

"I'll help you, Jet, when I think it's safe; but it won't pay to let you have the box yet awhile. Wait till you see what comes out of this scrape with Skinney, an' come 'round an' tell me 'bout it to-night."

Then Master Grant stalked gravely away, with the air of a highly-prosperous and thoroughly-satisfied merchant, and the hungry ex-striker walked mournfully down Broadway, with very little hope of finding an opportunity to earn money.

Fully half an hour before noon, all the strikers, except Jippy Simpson and Skinney Jones, had gathered at the rendezvous.

When they entered the park, those who had not heard

all the news, believed the strike was very nearly a failure ; but immediately Jake and Sim told of the Jersey City boys' visit, and of the contribution brought, all grew excited.

The receipt of twenty cents had caused the matter to wear an entirely different aspect, and every one looked as eager and sanguine as on the night when the Union first sprang into existence.

Baldy was the only boy who had nothing to say relative to the very substantial sympathy shown by their neighbors. He wanted his followers to look upon the donation as something which had been the legitimate outcome of his personal exertions, and treated it in the most matter-of-fact manner.

He was positive there would be no more grumbling against his rule for twenty-four hours at least, and was content with this further lease of power, believing before it came to an end some other move would be made in his favor.

Of course Jake and Sim, while telling the good news, did not fail to repeat the dreadful suspicions concerning Skinney's honesty ; and every fellow was so excited that even those who had no dinner to anticipate, forgot their hunger.

It was nearly one o'clock when Master Jones made his appearance ; and as he came through the park, looking as if actually bowed down by weight of business, it was hard for his friends to believe him a defaulter.

If guilty, he suffered no apparent pangs of conscience, but greeted his brother strikers with a genial smile, as he

seated himself by the side of Baldy, wiping his forehead with his coat-sleeve to show he had had a weary, uncomfortable tramp.

Not a word was spoken for some seconds after his arrival. Every one gazed at him inquiringly, and he grew so restive under the prolonged stare of the crowd that he asked nervously, —

“What’s the matter? Has anything happened to make you all look so glum?”

No one spoke.

He tried to smile, as if believing the affair some joke devised to mystify him; but the attempt was a failure, and he squirmed about a moment longer, after which he said, —

“I s’pose you ’re waitin’ to know how I made out? Well, I saw a dozen boys, an’ they was willin’ to help us, but did n’t have much money. I got five cents, an’ —”

“Where is it?” Baldy asked sternly, as he held his hand toward his brother officer.

“Oh, you need n’t be ’fraid I ’ll keep it,” and Skinney began to count the pennies which he took from his pocket, saying, as he handed them to Baldy, “There’s the nickel I collected, an’ eight cents what was left outer the dime you give me. We can git some more money over there sure; for the fellers said they’d save up, an’ if the strike hung on till Saturday we could have a pile. Did anybody come from Jersey City?”

“There were seven here a little while ago; but we won’t talk ’bout that now. How much cash have you brought in all, Skinney?”

"How much?" and Master Jones looked as if he was calling upon his memory to do him a favor. "Let me see. I got two cents when I first went over to Brooklyn, fourteen the next time, an' five to-day. What does that make?"

"Twenty-one cents," Denny Drake cried promptly.

"Well, that's all I've collected. What of it? Don't the fellers think it is enough?"

"They ain't kickin' 'bout that, Skinney, but two of the crowd saw you ridin' on the front platform of a Third-Avenoo car with a cheeroot in your mouth, an' we wanter know where you got the money to sport 'round in that style?"

Master Jones certainly did not look like an innocent boy at this moment.

His face flushed a deep crimson, his lips quivered, and he gazed from one to the other in a quick, nervous manner, as if seeking sympathy.

"You'd better own right up, Skinney," Master Higgs said in a fatherly tone. "We shall be sure to find it out if you lie to us; an' it'll be all the worse when we do."

"I ain't took any money from the Union," he replied, in a voice which was not remarkable for its steadiness. "I did ride up on the cars, an' bought a cheeroot; but the cash was mine."

"Where'd you git it?"

"Tim Bagley paid me nine cents on a knife I sold him last Saturday, an' that's where I got it."

"Did you spend money when you owed five cents

to the Union?" Baldy asked quickly; and Denny Drake shouted:—

"He 's one of the officers, an' did n't pay up like the rest of us!"

"Hold your tongue!" Master Higgs cried peremptorily. "I stood good for it, so that was all right."

"I don't b'lieve Tim ever owed him any money," Jake said. "He hasn't had anything to sell since I knowed him."

"Say! be you the boss of this concern, or be I?" and Master Higgs's swollen nose seemed actually to gleam, so angry was its owner.

Jake thought of the contribution from Jersey City just in time to prevent himself from making a disrespectful reply; and, after waiting a second or two, Baldy addressed himself to the company:—

"If Skinney has been doin' anything crooked, of course we want to know it, an' out he goes. Mike Cassady says the officers of a Union must put down every cent they spend, so 's anybody what has the right can see it; an' the Boss Walker's got to do the same as me. But we'll give him a chance. If he 'll bring Tim up an' let us hear him tell 'bout payin' that nine cents, then we 'll have to b'lieve it."

"I can do that mighty quick," Master Jones said, with a sigh of relief. "He's sure to be over on Chatham Square, an' you fellers wait here till I come back."

Even before Skinney ceased speaking he started off, and by the time the last word was uttered had reached the sidewalk, so rapid were his movements.

"I reckon it's all right," Baldy said, when his brother officer was lost to view amid the throng of pedestrians; "an' now there's somethin' else to fix. Three or four of the fellers have n't got any money, an' the collections don't come in fast enough for the Union to help all hands, so we must rig up a plan till we can make other folks chip in what's needed."

"Are we goin' to shinin' agin?" Denny asked impatiently.

"Some of the crowd are; an' this is the way I thought we'd do it. Of course them as holds offices have got their hands full 'tendin' to the Union; then a good many must chase *Italians*. Now, I'll 'point ten to go out shinin'; an' the rest will keep everybody else away, so's they can charge a dime. The shiners will pay me what money they make; an' I'll split it up, till all hands can git some."

The scheme was not received with as much enthusiasm as Baldy had anticipated.

The strikers could not understand why, if they worked at their legitimate business under the new scale of prices, they should be obliged to pay all their earnings into the treasury.

It was not such a proposition as pleased them; but yet no one had any remark to make.

"Well, what's the matter?" Baldy asked fretfully, after he had waited several moments without receiving a reply. "Do you know of anything else we can do? Some of the crowd must keep *Italians* away; an' them as does that part will want vittles same's the rest."

"Who's to do the shinin'?" Jake asked, determined not to commit himself until he knew what duty would be assigned to him.

Baldy called out the names of ten members, among whom was Denny Drake; and those who had not been selected for the hard work were immediately convinced the plan was a good one.

"I s'pose it's got to go that way," Jake said, in a tone of satisfaction; and Baldy, seeing that such of the members as were simply to hunt Italians felt contented with the arrangement, assumed a more dictatorial tone in speaking to the others.

"There's no use kickin' 'bout what can't be helped, an' them that don't like it can git outer the Union. As Mike Cassady says: We don't want no cats what won't ketch rats. Of course that don't mean the bosses, for they have all they can 'tend to."

"But where's the money we've already paid in?" Denny asked anxiously. "That would help a good many of the fellers."

"Don't bother your head 'bout that. When the time comes, you'll know where every cent went."

"Is it spent?" and Denny stood gazing at the Boss Shiner in open-mouthed astonishment.

"That ain't any of your business!" and Baldy actually screamed, so indignant was he that an ordinary member of the association should dare to question him thus closely. "You, an' all the rest what I 'pointed, will git your boxes an' go to work right away, or we'll bounce you outer the Union quicker'n a wink."

The ten boys who had been selected stood irresolutely a moment, and then turned to obey the peremptory command.

In that brief time of hesitation they realized, as had Jippy, how disagreeable would be their position if they incurred the enmity of the Union.

While that body had an existence, it would be almost a matter of impossibility for them to earn anything blackening boots; and it was a question of submitting silently, or choosing some other method of gaining a livelihood.

When the sad-visaged party left the park to get their boxes, Baldy asked if any one had seen Jippy Simpson since morning.

"I left him talkin' with Joe Dowd," Sim Brown said. "I reckon he's goin' inter the newspaper business, so's to git some money."

"If all the fellers what don't like the Union go to sellin' newspapers, the strike'll be busted," Baldy said musingly. "Now, if we can hold on three or four days, the money'll come in from Brooklyn, Jersey City, an' all 'round; then we can lay back an' take it easy."

"Why don't we stop 'em, if it's goin' to do any harm?" Jake asked. "I reckon Jip Simpson would have a rough time of it, no matter what he was up to, if all hands of us jumped down on him."

"Would the other fellers 'gree to doin' that?" Baldy asked.

"Of course, if it was to keep the strike goin'," Jake

replied; and the remainder of the party looked, if they did not actually nod assent.

"Then you make him come up here to-night, if you run across him," Master Higgs said vindictively. "We'll show him he don't need money more 'n the rest of us does."

Before any further discussion could be had on the subject, Skinney came into the park, looking flushed and despondent.

"I could n't find him, an' some of the fellers said he'd gone to Harlem. I don't want you all down on me; an' I oughter have a show till I can flash Tim up. Now, why won't it do jest as well if I bring him here tomorrow?"

"I s'pose we'll have to wait," Baldy said, hesitating long enough to see that the others had no objections to offer. "We can't stop now to choose a new Boss Walker, even if it was right to turn you out, so we'll let it drop till we see Tim. Go over to Williamsburg agin, an' we'll talk 'bout it to-night."

Some of the party remembered afterward that Skinney went on this mission without asking for money with which to pay his expenses, even though he professed to have turned over to his superior officer every cent in his pocket; but at that time no attention was paid to this fact.

Just as Master Jones departed, one of the working division came up with his box, and reported having seen Jippy selling papers.

"He's tryin' to git money for Sam Carleton," the boy

added. "Joe Dowd told me all about it, an' he says before this strike is over he 'll be square with Baldy for poundin' Sam."

"He 'll have a good time doin' it," Master Higgs said, with a laugh; but at the same time he glanced over his



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shoulder apprehensively, as if fearing Joe might be dangerously near. "What we 've got to do is straighten Jip Simpson out. If he goes 'round helpin' everybody who gets thumped, we 'd better give the strike up right

away. He 's no right to do that while he b'longs to the Union."

"Why don't we bounce him?" Sim asked.

"We 'll do worse 'n that," Baldy cried angrily. "If any of you fellers find him, bring him over here, an' tear his papers up. We 'll show him we mean business."

With this threat the Boss Shiner settled back on the bench in his favorite attitude, and the strikers departed to attend to their respective duties, the most important of which appeared to be the persecution of a boy whose only offence was the desire to atone for a grievous wrong inflicted by the association upon his friend.

CHAPTER IX.

JIPPY'S PUNISHMENT.

IF Baldy could have embraced himself, he would have done so when alone once more, because of having conceived the brilliant idea of dividing the strikers into fighters and laborers.

By this means, the Union would be self-supporting, or, what was better still, could support its officers in a style befitting their rank; and two-thirds of the members were perfectly satisfied with the arrangement.

It was quite natural that those who had been selected as laborers should object to doing all the work; but there were only ten dissatisfied boys, and Master Higgs felt quite positive they could easily be kept in subjection.

The one great trouble which beset him was as to whether the Boss Walker had really misappropriated any of the funds.

He had not been satisfied of Skinney's innocence when the investigation was concluded; but it seemed wisest to appear so, since if it was learned Master Jones had been untrue to his trust, the strikers might demand a rigid accounting of *all* the cash received; and he was not yet prepared to make public the amount expended for the maintenance of the officers.

Therefore it was that he professed to believe the explanation given; but at the same time he was resolved to have a strictly private interview with Skinny on the subject.

While Baldy was thus shaping the course of the Union in accord with his personal needs and desires, Jippy Simpson was striving to take his friend's place as breadwinner for the Carleton family.

He had had a long interview with Joe Dowd immediately after leaving the ranks of the Italian hunters, and the result was that he embarked in the newspaper business temporarily.

Joe promised to tell the other dealers why this change of business had been made, in order that Jippy might not be molested, and also agreed to solicit contributions in Sam's behalf until they should, with Jippy's profits, form a sum equal to what the boot-black would have earned.

The venture promised to be a success from the beginning. The small newsdealers welcomed Sam's friend heartily, allowed him to sell his wares wherever he chose, and often stepped aside to their own disadvantage in order that he might reap the benefit of a large business.

With all these things in his favor, it is little wonder Jippy had an unusually good forenoon's trade.

The profits amounted to considerably more than Sam could have earned in the same length of time, and it surely seemed as if there would be no necessity of calling upon the boys for any further assistance.

The stock of morning papers, and it had been replenished three times, was nearly disposed of, when little Jet came up, looking quite as woe-begone as on the previous day.

"Have you left the Union?" he asked in surprise, on seeing his friend plying his new vocation with the air of an old hand at the business.

"No, I have n't gone quite that far; but I'm workin' for Sam Carleton. I s'pose you know Bald Higgs pretty nigh pounded the life outer him?"

"Yes, some of the fellers told me 'bout it. How's his sister?"

"She's awful bad, an' I don't know what they'll do if we can't scrape up money enough to help 'em."

"Is there any way I can work for him?" Jet asked earnestly.

"I guess not, old man. It seems to me you'll have as much as you can do to look out for yourself. Hower you gittin' along?"

"Pretty rough. The last square feed I had was down to your house. I earned ten cents this mornin' luggin' a valise from the Erie depot up to the Astor House, an' I was goin' to buy a stock of papers this afternoon; but I met Jake Albeck a little while ago, an' he said the Union would thump the life outer me if I did that or blacked boots. What *can* I do, Jippy? I ain't a striker now, an' don't see what makes 'em jump down on me so bad. I'll bet Bald Higgs would rather shine for a nickel than be as hungry as I was when I went over to the Ferry."

Jet's case was another for which Jippy felt in a measure responsible; but yet he was at a loss to know how he could render any assistance, since one family would be all he could care for at a time.

To persuade the other newsboys into aiding Jet, by allowing him to sell papers, would be useless; for however much caution might be exercised, the hour must come when some of the strikers could carry out their threats, and yet, at the same time, there was no other means by which the boy could gain a livelihood.

"If you only had some decent clothes you might git a job in a store," he said thoughtfully.

"Yes; but I'm pretty lucky to have even these; an' it's no use talkin' 'bout that. I tried a little while ago to git a chance in one of the telegraph offices; but they said they did n't take on boys who had n't any home."

"I'll tell you what to do, Jet!" Jippy exclaimed suddenly. "I'm goin' down to Sam's house in a minute, to carry what money I've made, an' you shall go with me. I'll bet Mrs. Carleton would be glad to have you there while he's in bed, an' Alice is so sick; 'cause she can't go out doors 'less she leaves 'em alone. You might do the chores, an' run errands, an' talk to Sam. There'd be somethin' to eat, anyhow; an' you could sleep on the floor in his room jest as well as not. It would n't be much of a job; but you'd have a place to stay till somethin' else turns up."

Jet was delighted with the idea. The thought of having a home, however humble, was very pleasant, and a smile of almost perfect content chased the woebegone

expression from his face as he waited for Jippy to sell the last of his wares.

In a short time, Master Simpson was ready to call upon his disabled friend.

The few remaining papers were soon disposed of, and, with Jet close by his side, he started for Sam's home, thinking he had arranged matters in a particularly happy manner.

Mrs. Carleton answered his knock, and, calling her into the hall-way, Jippy explained the unfortunate position in which Jet was placed, concluding by asking if the ex-striker could remain there a few days, providing he would make himself useful.

"I'm willing to share with him what little we have," she replied readily; "and he can be of great assistance to me if he is so disposed."

"He'll stand on his head if you ask him to," Jippy said confidently; and Master Blake moved around as if about to show that he could do exactly what his friend had proposed. "Us fellers — some of the newsboys, I mean — will see you git jest as much cash as if Sam was workin'. Here's fifty-five cents; an' we'll have more by dark."

Mrs. Carleton drew back as Jippy extended his hand in which was the money; and fearing she would refuse to take it, he said quickly: —

"Don't be 'fraid; but it's all right. We've been sellin' papers for Sam, an' this is the profit. He'd do the same for us, so it's only the square thing."

It would have been positively cruel to reject the

generous offer, and when Mrs. Carleton put the pennies in her pocket, Jippy's face was radiant with joy.

"Will you go in and see Sam?"

"Jest for a minute; but I can't stop long, 'cause it's 'bout time the evenin' papers were out. How's Alice?"

"She remains the same as when you saw her yesterday," and the tears came into the poor mother's eyes as she spoke, causing Jippy to hasten into Sam's room at once, for he could not look unmoved upon another's sorrow.

The striker's victim was quite as thoroughly enveloped in bandages as on the previous day; he had a trifle more control over his limbs, however, and the one uncovered eye glistened with delight as he saw his visitors.

"I can't stop but a minute," Jippy said hurriedly, "'cause I'm sellin' papers now. Jet's goin' to stay with you, an' he'll tell all the news. Hower you feelin'?"

"Mighty sore; but I b'lieve I could earn some money if mother would let me git up."

"Don't bother 'bout that, old man. Joe Dowd an' a lot of his crowd are doin' what they can to help you out; an' I jest give your mother some money we'd raked together. I'll be here to-night after trade is over, an' stay quite a while."

Then, fearing lest Sam might insist on knowing exactly how the money was raised, Jippy hurried away to purchase his wares for the afternoon's business.

He had spent more time with his friend than he in-

tended, for on arriving at the newspaper offices he found that the papers had been ready for delivery nearly ten minutes.

The other boys were on the street taking the "cream of the trade;" and Jippy made haste to add his cries to theirs.

Business in the vicinity of the Astor House was not so brisk as he had expected; and, without a thought that the strikers would attempt to work him any injury, he made his way along Park Row, where nearly half his stock was disposed of in less than a quarter of an hour.

Then there was another lull, and he said to himself, as he walked further up the street,—

"I'll see what I can do 'round the bridge. Joe Dowd sold twenty there this mornin'."

It would be necessary to pass very near the strikers' meeting-place to reach the desired spot; but he gave no heed to this fact.

There was not even the shadow of a fear in his mind when he saw Jake and Sim coming toward him from the direction of the park.

"Hello!" he cried in a friendly tone. "How's the strike gettin' on?"

"First rate. We'll have everything straightened as soon as we can show three or four duffers that they can't fool with the Union," Jake said carelessly. "What are you doin' now?"

"Sellin' papers. Sam can't even stand up, an' his sister's so sick somebody's got to help 'em out."

"Oh, you're workin' for him, eh?"

"Yes, till he can take hold himself," Jippy said cheerfully, not paying any attention to the fact that Sim and Jake were on either side of him. "Who's been doin' anything against the Union now?"

"You're one of 'em!" Jake exclaimed, as he seized Jippy's left arm at the same moment Sim grasped his right. "D'yer think we'll let you break up everything when we're on a strike? You'll find out before long what it is to kick agin a Union."

As Jake spoke he began to hurry Jippy toward the park, lest a policeman should interfere; and the captive could make no resistance.

The latter tried to hold the papers under his arm, for he was thinking more of saving the property which he considered as belonging to Sam, than of his own possible fate; and not a word was spoken until they stood before Baldy, who, surrounded by half-a-dozen strikers, was lounging gracefully upon a bench.

By this time, Jippy's anger had begun to rise, and he said hotly, when brought face to face with the Boss Shiner, —

"I won't have no sich kind of foolin' as this, Bald Higgs! I ain't doin' nothin' to any of you fellers, an' want to be let alone, or things'll be mighty warm for all hands."

"Have n't you bin helpin' Sam Carleton?" Baldy asked sternly.

"Of course I have. D'yer think I'd let him lay there at home without a cent, when his sister's 'most dead?"

"Did n't you know we pounded him 'cause he would n't join?"

"What's that got to do with it? You smashed his box, an' drove him outer the business; and that's all you could do."

"Don't make any mistake, Jip Simpson. We're goin' to show you what we'll do to fellers who try to break us up. See how much money he's got," Baldy added as he turned to some of the boys nearest; and there were plenty of volunteers ready to make the search.

Jippy was in a boiling rage by this time, and kicked viciously as the strikers approached, dealing two or three heavy blows with a vigor that sent more than one headlong; but his resistance was short-lived, for in a few seconds a dozen of the boys were holding him firmly down on the ground, while a couple more turned his pockets inside out.

"Don't you *dare* touch that money!" he screamed, making fruitless efforts to strike his adversaries. "It is n't mine; an' if you take it I'll have you 'rested for stealin'! That b'longs to Sam Carleton, an' his sister's dyin'! Let it alone, an' you may pound me all you want; but *don't* take what's for a poor sick girl!"

Threats and entreaties were alike in vain. Baldy would not listen to the former any more than the latter, but urged his subordinates to make haste, lest a policeman should put in an appearance; and the boys continued their search, without regard to poor Jip's pleadings.

They found twenty-eight cents; and this was handed over to the Boss Shiner, who put it in his pocket as calmly as if it were his own property.

"Now tear his papers up," Baldy cried; and Jippy realized that it would be useless for him to make any remonstrance.

He watched the destruction of his property in silence; but there was that in his face which told how he would act if he had the opportunity, and when the work was finished he cried angrily:—

"You can do this 'cause you've got a crowd; but jest wait, Bald Higgs, till I ketch you alone!"

"If you don't hold your tongue, we'll fix you so's you can't move," the Boss Shiner said threateningly. "We're runnin' this Union, an' before we git through you'll wish you'd minded yer own business. If we see you sellin' papers agin, we'll serve you the same's we will Jet Blake, if he dares to try it. Go home now, sonny, an' be careful to stay there till this strike's over, or you'll be sorry. Let him up, fellers; an' if he shows fight, thump the head offer him."

Those who had been holding Jippy now released him, and, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, he leaped to his feet, standing in front of Baldy as if intending to carry out his threat then and there.

Master Higgs showed by the expression on his face that he feared he was to suffer for his injustice.

He sprang over the back of the bench, and called loudly for his adherents to seize Jippy without delay, lest he receive some injury.

"Don't be scared," Jake said with a laugh. "He won't have much of a show to hurt you while we're 'round."



Jippy

JIPPY RESENTS HIS ILL-TREATMENT.

During fully half a minute, Jippy stood looking threateningly at Baldy; and then, realizing how worse than useless it would be to attempt to punish the fellow who was the instigator of the outrage, he turned on his heel, walking swiftly away, lest the strikers should see the tears of disappointment which he could not repress.

CHAPTER X.

ADVICE.

THERE was very much in Mrs. Carleton's home that a boy of Jet's age could do to aid the good lady in caring for the invalids; yet, during the first two hours of his stay there, Jet felt as if he would never be able to perform sufficient work to pay for a single meal, although he succeeded in occupying the greater portion of his time.

When there was nothing more to be done, he seated himself by Sam's side, and did not a little toward reconciling that much-abused boy to his present condition of helplessness.

It was at about the time when Jippy was being disciplined by the Union for daring to assist a friend in distress that Mrs. Carleton asked Jet if he would be willing to do an errand for her in the vicinity of Grand Street and the Bowery.

As a matter of course, the new member of the Carleton family was not only willing, but glad of an opportunity to aid Sam's mother in any way; and, after receiving his instructions, he remembered that he had promised Teddy Grant he would call at the latter's place of business with information as to what

had been done by the members of the Union regarding Skinney's unwarranted extravagance.

"I know a feller what keeps a news-stand up where you want me to go," Jet said, "an' I promised to tell him what the Union was doin'. I don't s'pose it makes any difference if I stop in an' see him a few minutes, does it?"

"Certainly not," Mrs Carleton replied. "There is no reason why you should hurry back."

"Is it Teddy Grant you mean?" Sam asked.

"Yes; I tried to borrow his box, but he wouldn't let me have it, 'cause he said the strikers would smash it. He asked me to come up an' tell him how Skinney got outer his scrape. I promised I would; but I wouldn't said so if I'd known I was comin' here to live."

"There's no reason why you shouldn't have done it, Jet," the invalid said quickly. "Mother won't want to go out again for some time; and I shall get along all right. Besides, I'd like to hear what Teddy has to say about the strike. When you go up there keep a good lookout for Bald Higgs an' his gang; there's no need of givin' them a chance to pound you."

"I'll take care of that part of it," Master Blake replied confidently; for now that he had a temporary home, the power for harm which Labor Union, No. 1, might exert against him, did not seem as great as it had a few hours previous.

Jet took good care, however, on his journey up town to avoid any locality where he would possibly meet

the strikers, and was so fortunate as to gain Master Grant's place of business without having seen a single acquaintance, either friendly or unfriendly.

It was a favorable time in which to call upon the owner of the establishment; for the evening's business had not yet begun, and he would be at leisure an hour or more.

"Well," he asked grimly, as Jet approached, "how's the Union?"

"'Bout the same as ever, I reckon."

"You kinder had an idea it was goin' to be busted 'cause Skin Jones had been off spendin' money which most likely didn't belong to him."

"Yes," Jet replied frankly, "I did think so; but it seems you was right, though the thing ain't really settled yet. Of course I didn't hear what was said, 'cause since they fired me I wouldn't be 'lowed 'round; but Denny Drake told me all 'bout it."

"Come inside where we can sit down, an' let's hear the story," Teddy said as he opened, at one end of the stand, a tiny door which gave egress to the sitting-room, about two feet wide and four long.

Two empty boxes served as chairs, and were of sufficient height to permit those who occupied them to look over the counter; therefore Teddy could attend to business equally as well inside as out.

Jet accepted the invitation, and began his story by describing the good fortune which had come upon him.

"That's what I call a big thing for you," Teddy said musingly. "I don't reckon them strikers will

let you do much of anything in the way of work; an' while Sam an' his sister are so sick it does seem as if you might find jobs enough 'round the house to pay for your grub an' a chance to sleep."

"I shall try mighty hard, anyhow. Jest think how I'd be fixed if it hadn't been for this chance!"

"Yes," Teddy replied, in a matter-of-fact tone. "Most likely you'd have a reg'lar wire-edge on your appetite by this time; but there ain't any use talkin' 'bout it now it's fixed. Tell me how Skinney got along with that Boss Shiner of yours."

Jet repeated the story as it had been told him by Denny Drake; and when he concluded, Teddy remained silent so long that his visitor fancied he was going to sleep.

"I was only thinkin'," the young merchant said when Jet asked impatiently, "What he was moonin' about." "It's mighty funny that two of the laziest boys in the business got all you fellers by the nose as they did. Why, I wouldn't lend Bald Higgs an' Skin Jones a cent, with any idea of ever gettin' it back, if they was to go right down on their knees an' beg for it."

"I don't reckon any other feller would, either."

"Then how was it that all hands was jest tumblin' over each other to get a chance to pay in a nickel apiece, so's to s'port them loafers?"

"I don't know," Jet replied, with a mournful shake of the head.

"But you was one who did it, an' oughter have some kind of an idea 'bout what made you do it."

"I didn't stop to think we'd got to s'pport 'em. Baldy talked 'bout our gettin' ten cents for a shine, if we'd go on a strike; an' it kinder seemed to me as if that Mike Cassady up to Harmony Hall—you know the feller we heard chinnin' on Chatham Square when the masons on the new buildin' went out on a strike?"

Teddy nodded assent.

"Well, Bald, he had a lot to say 'bout him; an' it kinder seemed to me as though he was the one what started it. You see we put in our money thinkin' some of the fellers might need to be helped; but I don't believe any of us thought it was to give them two a chance to swell."

"That's 'cause you jumped at the thing so quick," Teddy said, with an assumption of wisdom, as he jingled the pennies in his pocket. "If all hands had been tendin' to business, Bald Higgs wouldn't have got the chance to flash up his schemes. Now, see here, Jet, let me give you a little advice."

"What's the use, now that things are jest as bad as they can be?" Jet asked despondently.

"It may keep you from makin' such a fool of yourself some other time."

"See here, Teddy, have n't you got somethin' else to give away besides advice? I'd like to know how to chip in an' help Sam Carleton along. It don't seem right for me to stay 'round the house all day, when I could be out earnin' half a dollar or so; an' the money would slide his mother along a good bit."

"I don't believe I could chip in that way, Jet. You

got inter the scrape with your eyes open, an' oughter be man enough to get out of it."

"I s'pose I shall, after a time," the visitor replied mournfully; "but it's goin' to be pretty hard work, so long as that Union lasts. It is n't as if I was n't willin' to work; but there's a crowd of fellers standin' ready to raise a row, no matter what I do. It ain't right, Teddy; I tell you it ain't right."

"Of course not; an' it was n't right for you to go in with 'em. Now, see here, this is the advice I wanted to give. Another time stick at what you've got to do, an' don't run 'round after fellers what promise to take care of you, or give you bigger prices, or anything like that."

"See here, Teddy, it ain't any use to jump down on me like this. S'posen I had n't gone into the Union? They would have served me out same's they did Sam."

"That's a fact," Teddy replied, after a brief pause; and then he added quickly, "But Baldy could n't have done it if so many had n't gone in with him; an' you was one to help the thing along as much as you knew how."

"I could n't have stopped the others; an' then I'd been in the same box I am now."

"I did n't think of it in jest that way, Jet; but you're right; an' I'm sorrier for you now than I was a little while ago. I'm always willin' to help a feller along when he does what he can to help hisself; but you see I jest bought this place, an' have got all my money invested. It takes a pile of cash to run a stand like this."

"Yes, I s'pose it does," the visitor said slowly, glancing

with undisguised envy at the capitalist before him. "I did n't allow you was goin' to lend me money, or anything like that. I thought, if I had your box, I might snoop out, when there was n't any work to be done in the house, an' earn a few nickels. You see, now that Sam's laid up, of course his mother's got it a good deal harder than ever; 'cause she can't leave Alice to go out to do any work."

Again Teddy remained silent a moment, as if in deep thought, and then said slowly:—

"It would n't be any kind of use, Jet, to lend you a box; 'cause it would only be smashed. Them fellers won't let you work now. I'll tell you what I might do: I've been hirin' a boy to go down town twice a day an' get the papers for me. Now, of course you could n't do that, 'cause the strikers would jump on you; but it might work for you to come here an' tend shop for me while I went. You could fix it with Miss Carleton, so's to get off; an' I'll give you ten cents a day,—that is," the store-keeper added quickly, as if alarmed at his own generosity, "I'll try it a spell, an' see if I can afford to do that much. It would be helpin' you, an' it would be helpin' Sam; an' I'm willin' to strain a point for the sake of doin' a good turn."

"Say, Teddy, you're a brick! I reckon that much money would help Miss Carleton along a sight. Anyhow, it would be a good deal better than for me to lay 'round there not bringin' in a cent."

"All right, Jet, you can begin now. I oughter go down town pretty soon; an' seein's how Sam's mother

knows where you are, it won't do any harm if you hold on here half an hour longer."

"Oh, that'll be all right. I told 'em I should stay here a little while; an' they won't be expectin' me so awful soon, 'cause I run almost all the way up."

"Then I'll go now. You know the price of papers; an' there's fifteen cents in the drawer to make change with. There won't likely be a great rush of business before I get back, so I don't allow you'll need any more than that."

Having made these arrangements, which he feared were rather too extravagant for a merchant of his standing, Teddy started down town at full speed, leaving the now hopeful Jet in sole charge of the establishment.

It seemed to the new clerk as if fortune was beginning to smile upon him; and he paced to and fro in his circumscribed space behind the counter, resolved that, as soon as these troublesome times were past, he would work industriously until he had saved sufficient money with which to buy a stand similar to this one.

He had just succeeded in making himself feel very comfortable in mind, when he was aroused from his day-dreams by an unpleasantly familiar voice, crying:

"Hello, Jet Blake! What are you doin' here?"

Looking up quickly, he saw Sim Brown, who was gazing at him with a decidedly unpleasant expression of countenance.

"I ain't doin' anything much," Jet replied, in some alarm. "Jest tendin' shop for Teddy while he gets the papers."

"So you 've hired out here, have you?"

"Well, yes, kinder," Jet said, half apologetically. "I've got to do somethin' to earn my grub, you know."

"Did you find out if the Union was willin' for you to go to work?"

"I don't know what business it is of the Union's, whether I work or not, so long as I don't shine boots."

"Perhaps it ain't any; but I kinder think we fellers have got somethin' to say about it."

"Look here, Sim, you strikers can't go 'round stoppin' me from workin', jest 'cause I had to leave the Union. It ain't right, I tell you! I've got to have somethin' to eat, same 's other fellers."

"I heard you was stoppin' down to Sam Carleton's."

"Well, s'posen I am? I can't stay there without tryin' to bring in a little money, can I?"

"I don't know what you can do," Sim replied gruffly, and then suddenly hurried away, leaving Jet in an unenviable frame of mind.

He did not really believe the strikers would attempt to interfere with him in his new position; but yet it was not pleasant to think they knew where he was, and might possibly trouble him in some way.

It was while he was reflecting bitterly on the injustice which the short-lived Union had already done, that the proprietor of the establishment returned with his stock of evening papers.

He did not pay any particular attention to the expression on his clerk's face, but said briskly, as he began arranging his wares on the counter:—

"If Skin Jones thinks he's goin' to get out of his scrape by tellin' that Tim Bagley paid him money, I reckon he'll find he's mistaken."



JET TENDING SIM BROWN'S STAND.

"Have you seen Tim?"

"I've seen somebody what knows him; an', if you strikers ain't 'fraid of Skinny and Baldy, you can prove your Boss Walker has been tellin' a lie."

"I have n't got anything to do with him now. I s'pose Bald Higgs would jest about thump my head off if I went 'round City Hall park; but there's plenty of other fellers who dare to say what they mean, an', if Skinney's been lyin', they'll find it out."

"I hope they will; but, 'cordin' to the way that crowd's been actin' for the last day or so, it don't seem as if they had spunk enough to — Hello, what do you want?"

This last question was addressed to some one coming up the street, and as yet beyond the line of vision of the clerk, who was standing behind the counter.

Looking out curiously, Jet saw, to his fear and dismay, a no less personage than Baldy Higgs, the Boss Shiner of Labor Union, No. 1, accompanied by Sim Brown and Jake Albeck. It was not necessary to hear the conversation which ensued in order to understand that the strikers believed it was within their province to discipline a boy even though he has been expelled from their ranks.

"Say, is it true you've hired Jet Blake to help you run this shop?" Baldy asked sternly.

"Well, s'posen I have? What business is it of yours? You ain't my boss."

"I don't claim to be," Baldy replied loftily; "but if there's a feller workin' here what went back on the Union, you'll find we've got considerable to say about it."

"Look here, Bald Higgs, you don't want to come 'round tryin' to make trouble with me," Teddy cried angrily. "I don't b'long to your gang, nor don't want

to; so the best thing you can do is to keep away, of there 'll be a row."

Teddy had stepped forward a few paces, as if to intimidate the Boss Shiner; and Sim Brown and Jake Albeck advanced quickly to the side of their leader.

The newsdealer instantly understood that if he should resort to blows in order to prove his right to be free from any interference of the Union, he might get the worst of such an encounter; therefore he resumed his occupation of arranging the newspapers, that they might be displayed to the best advantage, and added:—

"I'm mindin' my business, an' I want you fellers to mind yours; else I'll tell the cop on this beat that you're tryin' to make a fuss."

"You can tell as many cops as you want to. We ain't kickin' up a row yet; but we shall if things go on like they do now," Baldy said emphatically. "You've got no right to hire Jet Blake; an' if you don't turn him off before to-morrow mornin', all hands of us will make it our business to break this stand up. I guess there ain't any policeman willin' to hang 'round here for the sake of takin' care of you."

"That's jest what we'll do!" Jake echoed. "We don't want a row with you, Teddy; but it's bound to come if you hire fellers what we've bounced out of the Union. If you take my advice you'll get rid of Jet Blake right away; 'cause if you don't, we'll do jest as Baldy says."

"Remember, it'll be forty or fifty to one, if you don't do what you're told," Sim added threateningly; and

then the three exponents of labor rights quickly retraced their steps, leaving the proprietor of the stand, and his new clerk, in great distress of mind.

"They'll do as they threaten!" Jet wailed. "There are so many of them now, that they think they can boss the whole town."

"If I was only sellin' papers, an' could run 'round wherever I wanted to, I wouldn't care what they'd do," Teddy said thoughtfully; "but they'll kick up a terrible row with me, I s'pose."

Jet understood from his employer's tone that the latter believed it advisable not to act contrary to the wishes of such a powerful organization as Labor Union, No. 1, and said mournfully:—

"I don't want to get you in any trouble, Teddy; 'cause you was awful good to give me a chance here, an' I knew they would make a kick against it. It seems as if I oughter earn some money to help Sam's mother along; but, of course, it ain't right to mix you up in a row, so I'll go away."

"It's jest as I said before, Jet. If it was n't for this stand, an' if I could go 'round town anywhere sellin' papers, it would be different; but you see if they should reg'larly make it their business to break me up, it wouldn't take such a dreadful long while."

"I know, Teddy, I know how it is," and Jet hung his head that the tears in his eyes might not be seen. "I won't stay a minute longer; an' perhaps the Union will get busted before I starve to death."

“ Now, see here, old man, don’t feel so bad. Let me pay you for what you ’ve done, an’ — ”

“ But I have n’t done anything yet, Teddy, an’ don’t want your money.”

“ Yes, you have. You stayed while I went down town ; an’ that ’s half of the day’s job, so take this nickel.”

“ I tell you I don’t want it, Teddy ; ’cause I have n’t earned it.”

“ If you don’t want it, perhaps Miss Carleton does ; an’ it’s no more ’n belongs to you, so — By jinks ! I’ll give you a dime ! I don’t care what Bald Higgs has got to say ’bout it ! Take this ten cents, go right down to Miss Carleton’s, an’ perhaps to-morrow you’ll get a job luggin’ a satchel.”

Teddy thrust the coin into Jet’s pocket ; and then, as if afraid he might regret his generosity, he turned quickly away to attend to his wares, not even so much as looking up when the sorrowful boy walked slowly down the street.

CHAPTER XI.

SAM'S SISTER.

WHEN Jippy left the park and those, who, under pretence of gaining their rights, were doing so much harm to others, he had no idea where to go, or what should be done.

He was without money, therefore another stock of papers could not be purchased unless he appealed to the generosity of Joe or his friends; and it was hardly advisable to do this, since there were many chances the strikers would repeat the outrage, if he disobeyed their commands.

It seemed strange a party of fellows could, in a big city like New York, prevent any one from earning money honestly; but Jippy knew what thirty boys, under the leadership of such an unscrupulous companion as Baldy Higgs, were able to do, and was firmly convinced it would be useless for him to attempt to sell papers, at least until the strike should be ended.

He might have called upon such of the newsdealers as were friendly toward Sam, to protect him; but, in order that they should be of service, a large number must remain in a body, which would prevent any of them from doing a paying business.

He walked on aimlessly, without heed as to the direction, until, when suddenly aroused to a consciousness of his whereabouts, he was in the vicinity of Trinity Church, where Joe Dowd could nearly always be found during the afternoon.

And he had not departed from his custom on this particular day, for Jippy had but just come to a halt, when he heard his friend shout:—

“Hi, Jip! Have you sold out so quick?”

Joe stood on the corner with a huge bundle of papers under his arm; and it was not many seconds before he had heard all the particulars of Baldy Higgs's last scheme for managing a strike.

“He oughter be killed!” Master Dowd said emphatically. “I wonder if he thinks that Union of his can run the whole town?”

“It comes pretty nigh runnin' this end of it,” Jippy said, with a sigh. “There's so many of 'em that a feller ain't got no show, if they're down on him. S'posen I should try to sell papers now? Some of the crowd would git the best of me before night, no matter how sharp I watched; an' what makes me feel worse'n all, is that I helped start the thing.”

“There's no use to fuss about what's been done,” Joe replied philosophically. “The question is whater you goin' to do?”

“I don't know. I'm as bad off as Jet; for there's no way I can earn a cent, 'cept by carryin' baggage.”

“Now, see here,” and Joe laid his finger impressively on Jippy's coat-sleeve; “you go to Sam's an' give him

what money the fellers have collected. Here it is—forty cents. Then come back 'bout dark; I'll see the boys, an' we'll fix some plan to take yer Boss Shiner down a peg or two. I'd be willin' to lose a whole day's work for the sake of breakin' up the Union."

"I'm 'fraid it can't be done. You see them as have joined will stick together jest as long as they can; an' I'll have to wait till all hands git tired of the thing."

"We'll see 'bout that. Go now, 'cause I can't stand chinnin' when I've got sich a stack of papers on hand; an' be sure to come here right after dark."

Jippy did not linger, for he knew that by remaining he would, in a certain degree, injure Joe's business; and he started toward Sam's home, making a long *détour* to avoid the possibility of meeting the strikers.

By doing this, he was obliged to pass very near his own dwelling, and went in to explain why he had not come for dinner, as well as to pour his troubles into his mother's sympathizing ear.

Mrs. Simpson had as kindly a heart as her son, and, on hearing Jippy's story of the Carleton family, she said:

"I'll go with you. We have a few dollars I had been saving for the rent; but that poor mother needs it more than we. 'Most likely there are many things I can do to help her; so we'll lock the doors, and you had better put some food in your pocket, if you are at all hungry."

"I don't feel as if I'd ever want anything to eat till I can serve Bald Higgs out same's he's given it to Sam, Jet, an' me. If I ever ketch him alone, he'll wish he'd never heard of a Union."

"If he is a bully and cruel, that is no reason why you should be one, Jippy," Mrs. Simpson said, as she made ready to accompany her son. "If you are attacked, I believe it is right to defend yourself; but I would feel ashamed to know either that you had provoked a quarrel, or were willing to avenge a wrong by fighting."

Jippy was quite positive Baldy Higgs needed a whipping; but he said no more on the subject. He had great faith Joe Dowd would devise some successful scheme; and since he was not going empty-handed to Sam's house, he could afford to wait patiently, believing the day of reckoning would surely come.

On arriving at Mrs. Carleton's, Jippy went directly to his friend's room, after introducing his mother, and, to his surprise, found both Jet and Sam looking very mournful.

"What's the matter?" he cried; and then, remembering the pale, motionless figure he had seen lying on the bed like one dead, he asked, in a low tone, "Is Alice any worse?"

"Mother thinks she is, an' Jet helped me in to see her; but she did n't speak. Oh, Jippy, if I could only git up, it seems as if I might do something."

"I don't reckon you could, if your mother can't," Jip replied, in a sympathetic tone. "The boys have sent forty cents, which makes ninety-five in all day; an' you would n't 'a' earned much more, if the Union had left you alone."

"I know *how* the boys sent it," Sam said, as he extended one bandaged hand toward his friend. "Jet

has been tellin' me all about it; an' I hope some time I can pay you back for bein' so good."

"Don't let's talk of that; 'cause it does n't 'mount to anything, an' I'm through now. The strikers stole twenty-eight cents from me, an' tore up all my papers. They say I sha'n't help you; an' it really was Joe what sent *this* money."

As a matter of course, the boys were eager to learn the particulars of the assault, despite their grief; and Jippy told the story in detail, concluding by saying:—

"Mother thinks I should be ashamed of wantin' to git even with Bald Higgs, by thumpin' him; but he's the kind of a feller what would n't understand anything else, an' I hope Joe'll fix up some way to serve him out. Why, if that Union keeps on, none of the fellers can work 'less he's willin'."

Sad as it may seem, both Jet and Sam appeared to think soft words would be wasted upon Master Higgs; but they must not be blamed very severely, for all three were smarting under the sense of such grievous injuries that it was difficult to bear them in silence.

Master Blake proposed that both he and Jippy complain to the police, charging Baldy with robbery; but Sam decided against this course at once, insisting that by so doing they would make enemies of every individual member of the Union, and then, even after the strike was ended, they might not be allowed to work.

During the remainder of the afternoon, they discussed the matter in all its bearings, without arriving at any decision as to what should be done; and at nightfall Jippy said:—

"I must go now to meet Joe, for he'll be waitin'. I reckon mother'll stay all the evenin'; an' if she asks for me, tell her I'll come right back."

"Don't have any row, even if Joe wants you to," Sam said imploringly. "You would n't 'a' got in this scrape if it had n't been for tryin' to help me along; an' you must n't make it worse."

"I won't do a thing to-night," Jippy promised; "but I'd like to hit Bald Higgs in the same place you did, jest once."

"It would only make things worse; for they'd give it to you awful afterwards."

"Well, I sha'n't have the chance, an' won't try for it now."

In another moment, Jippy was out of the house, running at full speed toward Trinity Church.

Master Dowd was at the rendezvous, and had two friends with him, who had come, as Jippy thought, to make some demonstration against the Union; but in this he was mistaken, for Joe said:—

"I've been talkin' with the other fellers, an' they don't think we can do anything. You see there ain't more'n fifteen of us, what would hang together; an' there's twice as many of them. We'll have to wait a while, an' p'rhaps Baldy's own crowd will git down on him."

Jippy wondered what he and Jet could do while they were waiting. He knew his mother would need money with which to pay the rent, more especially since she had taken her little hoard to Mrs. Carleton; and how any could be earned while the Union had peremptorily

forbidden him from working, was more than he could imagine.

He did not speak of this to Joe, however, because he felt it would not be manly to burden another with his private troubles, but said, in the most cheerful tone he could assume:—

“It 'll come all right somehow, I s'pose; an' I ain't so bad off as a good many fellers would be who had n't a home an' a mother.”

“Denny Drake has been turned out,” one of Joe's companions said. “I saw him 'bout six o'clock, an' he told me.”

“What was that for?” Jippy asked, in surprise. “If Baldy keeps on this way, he 'll have more fellers out than in.”

“An' then 'll be the time when you can git the best of him,” Joe exclaimed. “But what about Denny?”

“Well, he an' a lot of others were chosen to shine so 's to git money for— Here he comes now, an' you can hear him tell the story.”

Denny was walking slowly up Broadway, looking as disconsolate as a boy well can look: his hands were thrust deep in his pockets; his hat was pulled down over his eyes; and he would have passed without recognizing his acquaintances, if Jippy had not spoken.

It was a simple matter to induce him to tell his story, for it was, quite naturally, the one thing uppermost in his mind, and a single word was sufficient to draw it out.

“Yes, they fired me; an' I s'pose I oughter feel glad

'cause I did n't git thumped. You know I was one what had to shine while the most of the crowd loafed 'round lookin' for *Italians*. Well, I earned eighty cents; an' Bald Higgs made me give it to him. The rest did, so I forked over, but told him I'd got to have twenty-five cents any way; 'cause my half of the rent was due, an' Bill would make me pay or leave. Then Bald said ten cents apiece was as much as we could have; so 's there 'd be some money left on hand. Now, jest think of givin' all but the price of one shine inter the Union!' Denny exclaimed, as he paused to allow his hearers full opportunity to understand how Master Higgs imposed upon his followers.

"Then 's when you kicked, I s'pose," Joe ventured to remark.

"You're right. I thought I'd been stepped on long enough; so I up an' told him I wanted a quarter, or I'd leave. Then Smarty Higgs — you know he's bigger 'n me — hit me under the ear, took my box away, an' the rest smashed it, the same 's they've done to so many. That 's what I git for helpin' start the Union, an' workin' hard so 's he an' Skin Jones can put on style. I s'pose they'll treat me like they have Jet Blake an' Jippy, — chase me 'round so 's I can't do anything."

Denny's case was a hard one, but so like all the others that his hearers could not suggest any relief. Sympathy he had from them in abundance; but it would neither pay his room-rent, nor provide him with a supper, and he walked on up the street disconsolately.

"I only hope Bald Higgs will fire enough fellers to

break the thing up; for that's the only way it can be settled," Joe said, with a sigh; and then, turning to Jippy, asked, "D'yer s'pose we could see Sam, if we went down to his house?"

"Of course. I'll take you right up into his room so you won't have to go where Alice is. Come on."

"Wait a minute," Joe said, as he went to the railing of the churchyard, and, after groping about a few seconds, drew forth a loosely-wrapped paper parcel.

"What's that?" Jippy asked, curiously.

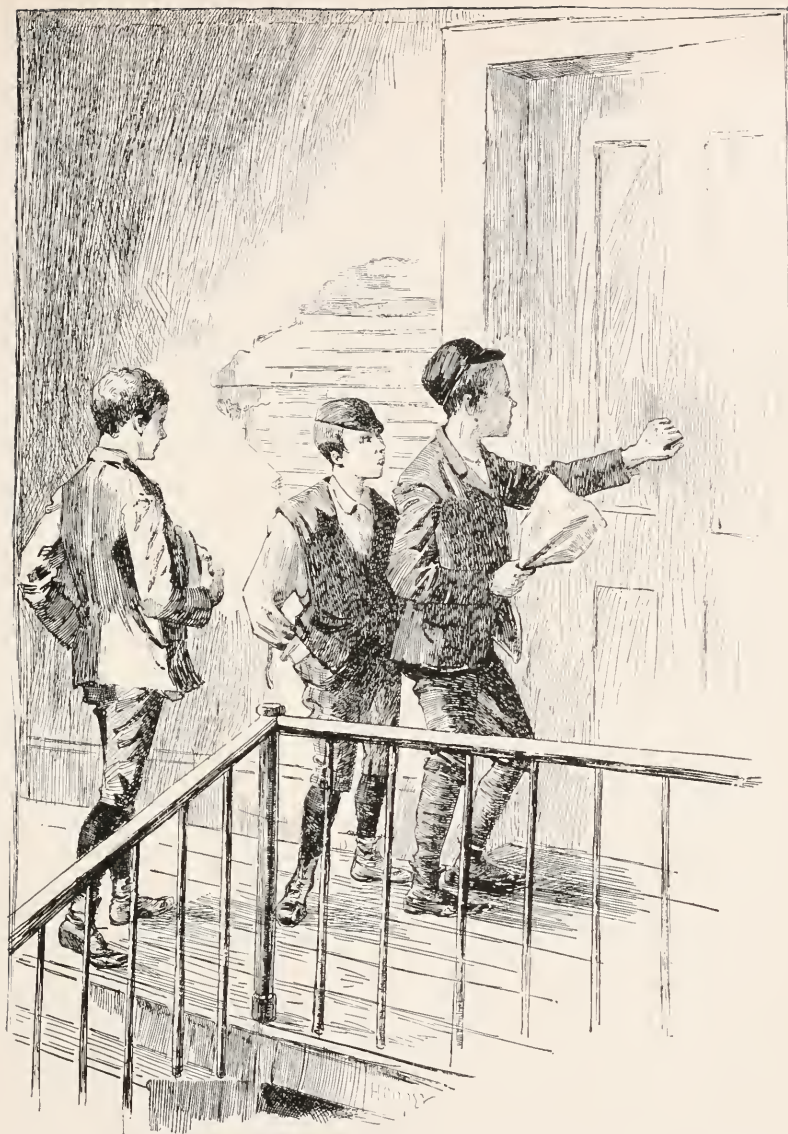
"The fellers chipped in to buy a bunch of flowers for Alice. The girl what sells 'em down here let me have this for fifteen cents; 'cause it was the last she had, an' 'cause it was for Sam's sister."

Then Joe pulled the paper apart a few inches to give Jippy a glimpse of the gift; and after that had been done, the party set out at a rapid pace for Mrs. Carleton's home, taking no heed whether the strikers saw them or not, for they were too strong in numbers to fear an attack.

On arriving at the house, Jippy led the way upstairs, and knocked softly, lest he should disturb the sick girl, little thinking that neither noise, nor pain, nor privation would ever trouble her again.

It was some moments before the door was opened, and then the visitors saw Jippy's mother. Her face was very grave, and she said, as she led the boys into the room to the bedside where they saw a tiny form shrouded in white:—

"The messengers from the Father came for Sam's



THE BOYS CALLING AT MRS. CARLETON'S.



sister; and she is now safe among the angels in the glorious City of Light."

The bright flowers, purchased from the hard earnings of the boys that a sufferer might be cheered by their beauty and fragrance, were placed in the waxen hands; and perhaps, as the white-winged angels looked back while carrying their tiny burden up to the Throne, they saw the offering, and whispered among themselves that as the kindly hearts had given, so should it "be given unto them again."

CHAPTER XII.

OPEN REVOLT.

THE night on which Denny Drake's name was erased from the list of strikers proved an eventful one for the Union.

When the laborers turned over to the Boss Shiner the money they had earned, and he decided that each boy could have but ten cents, all were dissatisfied.

The summary expulsion of Denny served to intimidate them for a few moments; but the spark of distrust had been ignited, and was being rapidly fanned into a flame by anger.

It was at the most critical moment, so far as Baldy's authority was concerned, that Skinney returned from his second visit to Williamsburg; and, for the first time since having been in office, Master Higgs hoped his subordinate had not collected any money.

In this he was disappointed, however; and, as if to make the position still more disagreeable, Master Jones burst upon the meeting like a small-sized whirlwind, shouting, in a tone of triumph:—

“I've got thirty-one cents; an' the fellers what I saw say they'll give more every week, if there's a chance we

can bring the price up to ten cents a shine. They're comin' over termorrer to see how things are workin'."

"What makes you yell so loud?" Baldy asked angrily, as he transferred the money from Skinny's hand to his own pocket. "D'yer think we can't hear?"

The Boss Walker was silenced in an instant. He probably fancied his superior officer had received some new proof of a breach of trust on his part, and went very meekly behind the bench on which Baldy was seated, standing there humbly, as if waiting to confront with his innocence the slander of enemies.

Two hours previous, the news which Skinny brought would have caused great joy among the strikers; but now they paid little or no attention to it.

Each member was thinking of the small amount he had received out of a comparatively large total, and there was no room in his mind for any other idea.

"Well, what's the matter with you fellers?" Baldy cried, after a long pause. "Why don't yer go home, so's to git back early in the mornin'?"

These questions were asked in a tone which was well calculated to arouse the ire of those whose anger was already on the point of bursting into a flame; and, unmindful of Denny's fate, Sim Brown replied sharply:

"We wanter know if we ain't goin' to git any more money; that's what's the matter with us. You've got plenty; an' we oughter have our share."

"Did you bring in a cent of it?" and Baldy had been in power so long that he forgot his customary prudence.

"If I didn't earn more'n you did, I'm a duffer! While you was settin' here swellin', I was out keepin' Italians away; an' when it comes right down to dots, I own as much of it as you do."

"Well, you carn't get it," Baldy snarled. "I'm the Boss of this Union, an' I'll run it. If you fellers had your way, it would be busted in no time. If you don't like my style, leave, that's all."

"You don't dare to fire me, same's you did the other fellers; 'cause you know I could pound yer head off."

"See here!" and Master Higgs started to his feet in a rage. "There are plenty of boot-blacks over to Jersey City an' Williamsburg what wanten to join; an' I can take in enough termorrer to git away with the whole crowd that's here. I'll do it, too, if you kick much. I was 'lected for four weeks, an' you can't choose anybody else till then; so you'd better be careful what you're about."

This bold speech had the effect of temporarily quelling the revolt.

The strikers believed, according to Skinney's reports, that there were a number of boys in the neighboring cities ready to join the Union; and, from what they had been able to do, it was easy to imagine their own situation in case forty or fifty strangers, all loyal to Baldy, should become members.

Even Sim Brown was silenced; and, noting the effect of his words, Master Higgs thought the proper time had come to bring the meeting to a close.

"I'm goin' to turn in now," he said, as he beckoned

to Skinney; "for we've got a pile of work to do in the mornin'. All hands must come as early as they can, 'cause there'll be a crowd of fellers over to see how we're gittin' along; an' them what have to go out shinin' wanten begin the first thing. If we've got plenty of cash on hand, an' more comin', folks'll shovel in the money; then, every striker can have as much as he needs."

With this implied promise that the wants of the members would be provided for within a reasonable time, the two officers left the place with a dignified step; and their followers stood looking at each other in painful indecision.

"I would n't trust them duffers too far with all that money," Sim whispered to Jake, after a moment's hesitation. "S'posen we git one of the fellers to watch, so's we'll know where they've gone; an' the rest of us figger up what we'd better do?"

Jake was in that frame of mind where only a word was needed to suggest a plan of action, and he said to two friends, —

"Sneak after them chumps; an' when they go inter a lodgin'-house, one of you run back to tell us, while the other keeps his eye on the place. We'll wait here till you come."

There was no member of the Union who would not have been willing, at that moment, to do anything for the purpose of bringing matters to a more satisfactory conclusion; and Jake's request was complied with on the instant.

After the spies had set out, Sim said, unconsciously assuming Baldy's attitude on the bench, —

"It's time we took a hand in runnin' this thing ourselves. How much money did that precious Boss Shiner git this afternoon?"

"I brought in ninety cents, an' Denny Drake had eighty," one of the laborers replied.

"That makes a dollar an' seventy," Sim said, after a short but severe mental effort. "How much did the rest earn?"

"I got sixty cents."

"Eighty was what I had."

"Fifty for me."

"Hold on!" Sim cried, as the boys spoke so rapidly that he had no time to add up the several amounts. "Go slow, while I count it."

Then, each of the laborers in turn rendered an account of his day's earnings; and it was learned that seven dollars and forty cents had been given to the presiding officer, to which should be added the sum Skinney brought from Williamsburg.

"He had seven dollars an' seventy-one cents, an' give us a dime a piece!" Sim exclaimed, astonished that the total was so large.

"There was twenty-six of us what got our rations," Jake said; and then, with a fragment of a lead pencil and a small piece of brown paper, he began to wrestle with the problem, coming out victorious a few moments later, when he cried, "That leaves five dollars an' 'leven cents in his pocket, besides the other money. Why, Bald Higgs never owned so much in his life!"

"An' there must 'a' been three dollars, countin' what we all paid an' Skinney collected," Sim added.

To say that the strikers were surprised at learning the amount of money which should be found in the treasury, would be describing their condition of mind in too mild a term.

Nearly every boy in the crowd thought it necessary to scrutinize the figures carefully before he could believe they were correct; and after this had been done, it seemed as if each fellow tried to speak at the same time, so great was the confusion which ensued.

When it was possible to make himself heard by all, Jake said:—

"It looks to me as if it was about time we handled our own cash; an' if we begin now, before Baldy has a chance to git a whole crowd of other fellers in, we can straighten things out. I ain't so sure that Skinney fixed it about ridin' on the hoss-cars. He was goin' to have Tim Bagley right over here; but he has n't come yet."

"It's no use to fuss over that," Sim said impatiently. "We could n't find out how much he'd collected."

"Why not? If you fellers will keep your eyes open termorrer mornin', so's Bald Higgs won't run off, I'll go 'round where Skinney's been, an' have Tim Bagley down to tell 'bout that knife-trade besides."

"Now you're talkin', Jake," one of the party cried. "Go ahead, an' we'll stick close to you. Don't be 'fraid we'll let either of 'em git away."

"Bald must n't see we're up to anything," Jake cau-

tioned the strikers. "Jest hang 'round, an' foller everywhere he goes till I git back."

"We 'll 'tend to that part of it all right," Sim replied; "an' you can bet he don't come any funny business over us."

At this point, as if something more was needed to further inflame the strikers against their officers, one of the spies returned with the information that Baldy and Skinney were in a "swell place fillin' theirselves up."

"Come down an' see 'em!" he cried. "They 've got a whole plate of chicken, an' a stack of pie!"

No one thought it actually necessary to corroborate this statement; but yet every boy followed the informant to the restaurant as if it would be of some particular advantage to have the evidence of his own senses.

The bosses of the Union were enjoying themselves without regard to expense, and with no compunctions of conscience, evidently, because the members of the association had been given only ten cents with which to buy food, and pay for a night's lodging.

The table was not absolutely groaning under the weight of luxuries; but to the hungry boys who were looking through the window, it seemed as if every delicacy of the season had been placed before the two officers.

The strikers stood gazing at the feasters for nearly five minutes; and then, as they moved away, Jake said, with a long-drawn sigh of envy:—

"Well, that's what you call runnin' a Union; an'



THE STRIKERS WATCHING THEIR OFFICERS.

them fellers have given us ten cents outer all the money that has come in! Bald must 'a' 'most broke his heart when he throwed so much away."

If any of the strikers had thought, previous to this, that they were wronging Master Higgs by suspicions, the sight of that table, on which it seemed as if there was enough to feed the entire party, would have been sufficient to harden their hearts against him.

There was no idea of hesitation now; every member of the association felt positive he had been swindled, and it was resolved that, as Jake expressed it, "the thing should be straightened out."

"Come away," Sim said at length; "they may see us, an' that never 'd do. Bald must n't think we're up to anything till we've got the whole racket fixed."

Then he led the party toward the park again, Jake stopping behind only long enough to warn the watchers against losing sight of the officers until the latter entered a lodging-house; and during the next half-hour the boys did little more than hold an indignation meeting.

At the end of that time, both the spies returned in the highest state of excitement.

"They 've bought gallery tickets up to the Windsor Theatre, an' have gone in as big as life!" one of the boys shouted; while his companion stood ready to confirm the startling statement.

"That settles the thing for to-night," Jake said. "It's no use to hang 'round any longer. Sim an' I'll lay for 'em up there, — we've got money enough to pay

our way in; an' we 'll watch where they sleep, even if we don't go to bed ourselves. In the mornin', every feller must come here, an' do jest what Baldy says till I git back from the places where Skinney went. I 'll be on hand with the rest at first, so 's they won't think we 're up to anything. Sim will find Tim Bagley; an' I guess we 'll be ready 'bout noon to have a reckonin'."

The strikers were too much excited to entertain for a single moment the idea of going home.

Every one would have volunteered to sit up during the entire night, had there been any necessity for so doing; and the majority followed Jake and Sim to the theatre, willing to spend the only dime they owned in order to see how Master Higgs looked and acted on the eve of his downfall.

Jake was too cautious to allow all hands to troop in, and said in a persuasive tone:—

"It would n't do for Baldy to see this whole crowd, when he knows every one of 'em needs his ten cents for a supper. Go off like good fellers, an' git somethin' to eat. We 'll do the thing up brown, or let you kick us from now till next week."

United as the party was in one common cause, not a single boy made any objection to the plan; and, after waiting to see that their representatives succeeded in entering the building, all followed Jake's advice.

The two officers, both looking remarkably happy and contented, were seated as near the front row of the gallery as they could get; and the amateur detectives stationed themselves quite a distance in the rear, even

though by so doing they lost the opportunity of seeing what was taking place on the stage.

The most thrilling drama ever produced would have had no charm for them at such a time.

Jake and Sim were on the sidewalk five minutes before the play was ended; and when the managers of the Union came out, they followed as closely as was possible without danger of exposing themselves to view.

Baldy was evidently bent on having a thoroughly enjoyable evening; for, shortly after leaving the theatre he purchased a quart of peanuts, and both walked down the street like honest citizens, until arriving at Connor's lodging-house.

"Well," Jake said, as Baldy and Skinney went up the dimly-lighted staircase, "it's no wonder he could n't give each of us but a dime, if they've got to have a swell supper, tickets to the theatre, peanuts, an' a fifteen-cent bed, all in one night. They won't spend any of our money after termorrer mornin', though."

Then, the two strikers looked about for some reasonably comfortable place in which to pass the hours that must intervene before their duty would be done; and within the building the officers of the Union probably enjoyed the unwonted luxury of a bed, without a thought that the time of their downfall was near at hand.

CHAPTER XIII.

RELAXATION.

WHEN the two officers left the members of the Union with an undefined promise as to what should be done in the future, neither of them spoke until they had walked from City Hall Square to Chatham Street.

Baldy was mentally calculating how much cash he had on hand, and perhaps deciding what proportion of it could be used to his individual benefit; while Skinney was in a painful state of doubt as to what the immediate future might have in store for him.

When he had returned, after collecting what he thought a large amount of money from members of the craft in Williamsburg, Baldy seemed positively angry; and the Boss Walker feared envious tongues might have been poisoning the ears of his superior officer. It seemed just at that moment as if his dignities were rapidly slipping away from him; and he feared to break the silence lest Baldy should summarily dismiss him, as he did Denny Drake after that young gentleman had earned for the common fund no less than eighty cents.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the two walked in silence until the Boss Shiner saw fit to speak; and, instantly, a great load was lifted from

Skinney's mind, for he realized that he was in no immediate danger, at least of being deposed.

"There's one thing about it," Baldy said, with the air of a person about to give the result of long and varied experience, "runnin' a strike pays; but it's mighty hard to keep some of the fellers where they b'long."

"I don't reckon you'll have much more trouble for a day or two, anyhow. It kinder s'prised the rest of 'em to think you'd fire Denny Drake out after he'd earned so much money."

"I'll s'prise 'em worse than that, if we can get in a lot of new fellers. That's all we need now, Skinney, to fix ourselves right up where they won't dare to 'lect anybody in our places. Once we get in a crowd of new strikers, the old ones'll find out they've got to walk pretty straight, or give up tryin' to shine boots in New York City."

"You'll get jest as many as you'll want," Skinney said emphatically. "All the fellers that I've seen, act as if they was jest 'bout crazy to go into the strike; an' if they can't get up one in their own town, they'll come over here."

"Are you talkin' this thing up the best you know how, Skinney?"

"Of course I am."

"You know we want the money, an' at the same time we must look out to have enough other signers, so's we can fire as many as we want to without bustin' the Union."

"I've talked it up, Baldy. Why, over to Williamsburg this afternoon I s'pose I saw more'n a dozen that are

jest achin' to come over here and join us; an' they'd done so too, right off, if I'd said a word; but I didn't like to do a thing like that without knowin' what you thought about it."

"That's right, Skinney, you want to go kinder careful. You mean right, old man; but you don't know as much as you might. Now, if you had, you wouldn't have been takin' that horse-car ride where the other fellers could see you."

"Oh, that's square enough, Baldy; what I told about Tim Bagley's payin' me the money is straight," Skinney said earnestly, almost pathetically. "I can fix the thing jest as soon as I get hold of Tim once more. You don't think I'd do anything out of the way against you?"

"Well, it did look a little queer, Skinney," Baldy replied thoughtfully. "When I go off, I take you with me; an' what I have is the same as yours."

"Yes," the Boss Walker said slowly; "all but the cigarettes; an' you looked so comfortable-like smokin' 'em, last night, that it seemed as if I couldn't get along without a cheroot. So, when Tim paid me, I bought one, an' got on the hoss-car so's to smoke where the other fellers could n't interfere."

"I hope it's all right, Skinney; 'cause it would be tough if you didn't straighten things out."

"I tell you I *can* fix it; cross my throat if I can't;" and although Master Jones spoke very emphatically, there was that in his tones which would have aroused the suspicions of a critical hearer.

"If you can, things will go along smooth, an' we shall

have it fat so long as this strike lasts. Let's go in here an' get a bang-up supper;" and the Boss Shiner entered a restaurant near at hand, with the air of one who has sufficient means with which to pay for all he may desire.

Skinney was delighted. He understood, from the manner of his superior officer, that any doubts as to his honesty had been allayed, for the time being at least; and, knowing to what extent the funds of the Union had been increased during this day, he anticipated a very pleasant evening.

Baldy felt so secure in his office that he allowed himself to be careless. Twenty-four hours previous, he would have looked around scrutinizingly, to ascertain if his movements were observed by any member of the Union, and even then might have hesitated before entering a public restaurant, lest one of his followers should come in while he was there. Now, however, it was as if he had no fear of the consequences; and, seating himself at the most inviting-looking table, which chanced to be in that portion of the saloon where he could readily be seen from the street, he invited Skinney "to fill hisself up."

Spendthrift thought the Boss Walker was, Baldy's extravagance surprised him. Roast chicken for two, with sweet potatoes, two plates of pudding, and two pieces of pie were ordered in a careless manner, as if it made little difference whether the amount of the check was one dollar or two; and when the waiter suggested that the pudding and pie should be served after the chicken had been eaten, Baldy said sternly:—

"Bring 'em all on at once; an' then we can see whether you try to cheat us out of any puddin' or not."

Neither of the feasters seemed to think they might have been followed, and were all unconscious of the many pairs of eyes peering in at them from the window.

During several moments after Master Higgs's order had been filled, no conversation was indulged in; and then, his hunger having been so far appeased that he could dally with the dainties in order to prolong his pleasure, Master Jones asked, in a particularly deferential tone, —

"Is there any chance you'll ever take Denny Drake back, Baldy?"

"*No, sir.* He broke one of the rules of the 'sociation, by kickin' at what the Boss Shiner said had got to be done, an' won't come back with us any more."

"But he's a pretty good worker," Skinney suggested timidly.

"There's plenty more that will do as much as he can," was the careless reply. "Mike Cassady says when you're runnin' a Union you've got to let the members of it know they can't interfere with the officers; an' I guess some of the fellers have found it out by this time. Teddy Grant did n't dare to keep Jet Blake after I went to see him; an' Jet'll have a mighty hard time earnin' any money. Sam Carleton's laid up where he won't get 'round for a spell; an' now Denny Drake's box is smashed, an' he'll have a hard row to hoe. If that don't show the fellers they can't fool with me, then I'm mistaken."

"Well, I should think they oughter know it by this time," Skinney replied, trying to express admiration by both tone and look.

"If they don't, I'll fire somebody else out to-morrow; an' then I guess they'll begin to think that what I say goes. If I had n't done jest as I have, there'd been a big kick to-night about money. Now, even Sim Brown don't dare to say very much. He started to raise a row; but I soon let him know whether it would pay or not. Now, see here, Skinney; after we've filled ourselves up, we're goin' to the theatre."

"To the theatre?" Master Jones cried, in astonishment.

"Yes, sir; that's where we're goin'."

"An' s'pose some of the fellers see us?"

"There ain't much chance of that. If every one had all the money he wanted, some of 'em might be snoopin' 'round; but the way I've fixed it, they'll be glad to sneak home. You see, we've got 'em now, Skinney, where we can do pretty much as we're mind to; an' it's time for us to pitch in."

A momentary expression of sadness came over Master Jones's face; he was wondering whether it would indeed be possible for him to satisfy the members of the Union as to his perfect integrity regarding the episode of the forenoon, and decided that it would be doubly painful to be obliged to resign his high office just at a time when it was possible for the officials to reap the reward of their labors.

He was careful, however, not to give words to such thoughts, and murmured gratefully: —

"I'll be mighty glad to go, Baldy; an' if you say it's all right, that settles it; for what you don't know 'bout Unions ain't worth knowin', 'cordin' to my way of thinkin'."

"Yes; I'm pretty well posted, Skinney," was the complacent reply; "but, you see, I've been studyin' this thing up so long that I oughter know heaps by this time."

Then, the highly satisfactory supper having been concluded, Master Higgs, with as much dignity as if his clothes had not been ragged, and his face was clean, paid the bill, and marched toward Chatham Square, Skinney following a pace or two in the rear, as if to show that, while he had been admitted to the great man's confidence, he did not consider himself fully the social equal of the Boss Shiner of the Labor Union.

Baldy purchased gallery tickets for the Windsor Theatre, as the spies reported to the strikers; and Skinney, knowing his friend had no funds of his own, understood that the money they were spending belonged to the organization of which they were officers. If the Boss Shiner could thus divert, for his private use, money which did not belong to him, surely the cheroot and the horse-car ride could not constitute any very grave offence, even though the pleasure had been paid for out of the contributions from sympathizers with the strike.

The evening was not one of unalloyed pleasure to the Boss Walker, because of the explanations which must be made on the following morning; but, during the walk from the restaurant to the theatre, he had

decided upon a plan by which he believed he could extricate himself honorably from his disagreeable position.

Baldy appeared perfectly satisfied with himself and all around him. So far as could be judged from outward tokens, he had thrown off the care which weighed him down during the day, and, apparently, had no fear for the future.

There was little opportunity for private conversation during the time occupied by the theatrical performance, and, strange as it may seem, neither of the pleasure-seekers gave any particular heed to those around him; therefore it was, they failed to observe Jake and Sim, who, although trying to hide themselves in the rear, might have been seen with but little difficulty.

When the play was over, Baldy yet further surprised his companion by spending ten cents for a quart of peanuts, and, with these delicacies under his arm, led the way toward Connor's lodging-house.

"We'll go to our room, an' eat jest as many of these as we want," Baldy said in a kindly tone. "I bought another box of cigarettes this afternoon, an' you shall have half. Say, Skinney, don't you think bein' officers of a Union is way ahead of shinin' boots for a livin'?"

"Of course I do; but there ain't many fellers, Baldy, what could run a strike the way you're doin'."

"I don't reckon there are," Master Higgs replied, in a tone of satisfaction; for this praise, although it had in fact been purchased, was very sweet to him. "Mike Cassady says it is only a few fellers what can take hold

of a thing like this; but anybody can be a striker; an' to hear them fellers talk 'bout my havin' charge of the money, you 'd think they thought I had n't oughter have what I wanted to spend. Why, where would they be if it was n't for me? Shinin' for a nickel; an' when I get through with 'em they can have ten cents apiece, — that is," he added, after a moment's reflection, "they can when there's money enough in the Union to keep things goin'. Say, you're sure Tim Bagley 'll come up an' tell he paid you that money, ain't you?"

"Of course I am," Skinney replied scornfully; but at the same time he was far from feeling as confident as he would have had it appear.

Entering Mr. Connor's establishment with the full knowledge that they were guests who were paying the highest prices for sleeping accommodations, and assuming such airs as they thought belonged by right to first-class lodgers, the two went directly to their apartment.

Baldy turned the flame of the small lamp as high as possible, that the room might be cheerfully illumined, poured the peanuts on the bed, where they could be reached without too much exertion, and brought to view the cigarettes.

"Now we'll eat all we can, an' then smoke as much as we're mind to. There ain't any need of our turnin' out too terrible early in the mornin'; 'cause I've made up my mind jest what them fellers have got to do, an' there'll be plenty of time to set 'em at it. It was a good idea to let ten of 'em go shinin'; for that brings in more money than you could collect in three days, no

matter what luck you had; an' I'll keep 'em on the same job till there 's plenty of cash."

"S'pose they kick?"

"There ain't much danger of that, after Denny Drake got fired. Now, if you collect any money to-morrow, don't yell out how much it is till you see whether I want you to or not. If the fellers act like they thought you was n't doin' anything, I'll wink, an' you can tell what you 've brought back. You see they was talkin' 'bout what I had in my pocket jest 'fore you come to-night; an' if I could have kept you from tellin' 'em, it would have been better."

"Of course I did n't know," Skinney said apologetically.

"Oh, I ain't blamin' you; but, another time, you wait till I wink before you say anything."

"I'll tend to that part of it all right. You see I ain't so well posted on runnin' a strike as you are."

"Well, you ain't, Skinney, for a fact, an' that makes it all the harder for me; but you'll get broken in after a while, an' when there 's a good many more fellers join, it won't be so hard to keep the rest of 'em from kickin'."

Then Baldy devoted himself so thoroughly to the peanuts that it was not possible for him to speak intelligibly; and his companion followed his example to the letter.

During at least twenty minutes, the two feasted; and at the end of that time both felt slightly uncomfortable in the region of the stomach. They had never before thought it possible to have a surfeit of nuts, but now

realized that it would have been better had they curbed their appetites.

"We'll be all right after we smoke," Baldy said, lighting a cigarette, and puffing at it vigorously.

Skinney joined him in his apparent enjoyment with such good effect that, in a few moments, the noisome vapor was like a cloud in the room.

It would have been better had the stock of tobacco been smaller; for each of the pleasure-seekers seemed to think it necessary to smoke until all the cigarettes had been consumed, and before this was done the young gentlemen were feeling decidedly the worse for their indulgence.

As a matter of course, both were sick, and very sick. Baldy threw himself upon the bed, regardless of the nut-shells which almost hid from view the covering; and the pallor of his face told eloquently of the nausea at his stomach.

Skinney crouched near the window, wondering if he was at the point of death, and thinking, with a certain melancholy sense of satisfaction, that if his lifeless body should be found next morning by the servants of the lodging-house, the members of Labor Union, No. 1, would never know if he had really defrauded them to the extent of paying for a horse-car ride and a cheroot from their hard-earned wages.

During fully half an hour, he remained struggling silently with his agony, and then asked,—

"Do you feel bad, Baldy?"

"Bad! I'm jest 'bout dead! Them cigarettes must



Hooper

THE TWO OFFICERS ENJOYING THEMSELVES.

have been poisoned! If I had n't had 'em in my pocket all the afternoon, I'd think sure Denny Drake put something in 'em, jest for spite."

"Perhaps we smoked too many."

"Too many! Why, I could have got the best of three boxes, an' not felt it a mite. Smokin' don't make me sick; I can tell you that! There's something wrong. The man what sold 'em to me better look out, 'less he wants to get the Union down on him!"

"I guess they was stronger than you generally have."

"Now, don't make a fool of yourself, Skinny Jones! You think you know pretty nigh everything, don't you?"

Skinney was silenced. Despite his sufferings, he realized that it would be unwise to provoke his superior officer; and he ventured no further remark. Fearing that the Boss Shiner might be displeased if he should claim his share of the bed, he remained crouching by the window-ledge until kindly sleep came to his relief.

CHAPTER XIV.

AN ACCOUNTING.

MESSRS. HIGGS and Jones did not make their appearance next morning until nearly seven o'clock, although the former had tried to impress upon the minds of his followers the necessity of going to work very early.

Probably their dissipation on the previous evening had so fatigued them that an unusual amount of sleep was needed; and perhaps the fact that they were in what Skinney called a "reg'lar bed" had something to do with their tardiness.

Jake and Sim, weary from long watching, and ravenously hungry, had begun to think that in some unaccountable way the boys had given them the slip, when they came leisurely out of the lodging-house.

"Here they are at last!" Jake said, with a sigh of relief. "We'll follow them long enough to make sure they're goin' to breakfast, an' then scoot for the park."

Baldy and Skinney went directly toward the restaurant where they had dined so satisfactorily twelve hours previous; and when they were inside the building, the two sentinels ran on ahead to warn their brother strikers the officers would soon appear.

As a matter of course, every boy was eager to learn what had been done during the night; and the story was soon told.

Some of the more thoughtful had brought to Jake and Sim a portion of their breakfast; and the hungry spies lost no time in showing their appreciation of this mark of attention.

In about half an hour, the Boss Shiner and his subordinate made their appearance; and Baldy expressed the most profound surprise that those who had been appointed laborers should still be idle.

"This is a *nice* way to run a Union!" he exclaimed, in a sarcastic tone. "Here's the same fellers what kicked 'bout not havin' money enough, layin' 'round like they owned the whole town. Didn't I say you must git to work early this mornin'?"

"Why didn't you turn out before?" one of the party asked.

"Me?" Baldy screamed. "If you'd been workin' half as hard as I have, you'd wanter lay in bed all day. Wasn't me an' Skinney snoopin' 'round town last night till 'most twelve o'clock. talkin' to fellers so's they'd help us? Didn't we walk an' walk, while you was in bed, till our legs pretty near dropped off? Jest try bein' Boss Shiner for a while, an' see if there's much chance to loaf!"

"How many fellers did you see?" Sim asked quietly.

"More'n a hundred; an', b'fore Saturday night, the Union'll have so many joiners that it'll be a tight squeeze to git 'em in this park. Mike Cassady says the

officers are the ones what have the hard work, when there's a strike; an' I begin to b'lieve him."

Baldy stretched himself out on the bench as if nearly exhausted by the labor performed exclusively for others, and looked around upon his followers with a benign smile.

Had he not been so positive of his ability to manage a party of strikers, he might have learned from the faces of those nearest that all was not working as well as he fancied.

"Had I better go over to Williamsburg agin?" Skinney asked his chief; and Baldy replied gravely:

"I reckon so."

This was exactly what must be prevented, if any information as to the amount of money collected was to be gained secretly; and Jake said, trying to speak in a careless tone:—

"He got a good deal yesterday; an' if the fellers are comin' over, what's the use of his goin' agin? Why not try Hoboken?"

"D'yer s'pose he'd find many boot-blacks there?" Baldy asked thoughtfully.

"Pretty nigh as many as anywhere else; an' I b'lieve he'd git more money."

"All right," Master Higgs said, as he gave Skinney ten cents. "There's money for the ferry. Be back by noon; 'cause we want all hands here if them new fellers come." Then, as Master Jones hurried away, he added to the others, "Now, you'd better go to work, if you 'spect any money to-night. I reckon

there 'll be a good many boys snoopin' 'round to find out 'bout the Union, so I'll stay right here."

This suggestion was carried out as readily as his harshly spoken orders had been obeyed the day previous; and, in less than five minutes, the master-spirit of the strike was left in solitary grandeur.

"Now, you hunt up Tim Bagley," Jake said to Sim, when the entire party were on Broadway, where they could not be seen by Master Higgs; "an' I'll try to git through with my part of the job by noon. If I ain't here, hang 'round till I do come, no matter what he says. The other fellers must keep to work jest the same's if everything was all right; an' I reckon Baldy won't have the biggest share of the money to-night."

Then Jake darted down Fulton Street toward the Ferry, and nine boys began to hunt for customers, while the remainder of the party searched for Italians.

The knowledge of Baldy's irregularities had caused a great change in the minds of the strikers.

Since understanding that he had started the Union for his own personal benefit, and, while professing to be eager all should gain their rights, disregarded even the necessities of his followers, they began to think Jippy, Jet, and Denny had been wronged. They were now anxious to see these boys, and the so-called fighting members of the association hunted for them rather than Italians; but not one of the three could be found.

The laborers had but little time to show themselves during the forenoon.

With the exception of those outsiders who might be

at Fulton Ferry, nine boot-blacks comprised the entire number below Canal Street, and, until twelve o'clock, they reaped a rich harvest of dimes.

At that hour, the patrolmen gathered near the Astor House; and when the working members had been called in, the party walked over to the park, where there was every reason to believe the head of the order awaited their coming.

Baldy was there, receiving a report from Skinney, who had evidently just arrived; but Jake was nowhere in sight, and the strikers looked anxious, for they did not want any controversy with the officers until the proof was ready.

"Skinney has had big luck," Master Higgs said, as the party drew near. "He's brought back seventeen cents; an' there'll be a crowd from Hoboken right away, — they come on the same boat with him. How much did you fellers make?"

"We have n't counted it yet," one of the working members replied; and all looked toward Sim, as if asking whether the cash should be delivered before Jake arrived.

"Fix it now so's you can give it to me while them fellers are here. We want to let 'em see we're pullin' in a pile of money, even if we are on a strike."

This gave an opportunity for delay, and each boy was remarkably slow in making up his account; but Baldy felt so well satisfied with everybody in general, and himself in particular, that he paid no attention to their movements.

To the great relief of all in the secret of his absence, Jake appeared in sight before any call had been made for the earnings; and, almost at the same moment, four boys entered the park from the west side.

Sim ran out to meet his friend, and, in a few words, explained the state of affairs, after which both approached Baldy's bench in time to meet the new-comers.

"Was you thinkin' of joinin' the Union?" Jake asked the strangers; and Master Higgs looked up in mingled anger and surprise that any one should dare interfere, when it was his exclusive right to receive the visitors.

"P'rhaps we would if the thing was goin' to work," one of the boys replied; and added, as he pointed toward Skinney, "That feller come over to git us to help you along; an' we thought we'd find out what was goin' on."

"I'll 'tend to this," Baldy said sternly. "*I'm* the Boss Shiner; an' another time, Jake Albeck, you'd better mind your own business."

"That's jest what I'm doin' now; an' you'll find out before I git through."

At these bold words every striker pressed nearer the bench; and the excitement became intense, but suppressed.

Baldy looked from one to the other in perfect bewilderment, and Skinney's face began to grow pale.

"We're glad you fellers was willin' to chip in when you thought we needed help; but there's a little business to be settled first, an', after hearin' it, p'rhaps you'll want to keep your money," Jake said, as he looked meaningly toward Master Jones.

"Hold your tongue, or I'll have you fired right outer this Union!" and Baldy leaped to his feet in a frenzy of rage.

"I sha'n't hold my tongue; an' p'rhaps you'll git fired first," Jake replied calmly. "You can stay an' hear what I've got to say," he added, as Master Higgs moved toward him, "or some of the fellers'll hold you down same's Jip Simpson was held when we was fools enough to steal his money for you."

"You ain't a member any longer!" Baldy screamed. "I'll take your name off the paper!"

"Then you'd better tear it up," Sim cried; "for all of us are backin' Jake, an' if you don't hold your tongue you'll git a worse poundin' then Sam Carleton did."

Baldy sank back upon the bench, and glared at the crowd around him in impotent rage; while Skinney cowered by his side in helpless terror.

"Now see here," Jake said, as he took from his pocket a piece of brown paper on which were a number of figures. "When Skin Jones come back from Brooklyn the first time, he said he only collected two cents. I've met three fellers what paid him a nickel apiece; an' we wanter know where the money's gone?"

"That was the second time I went over," Skinney managed to say, in a faint voice.

"No, it was n't, for then you brought back fourteen cents; an' here's the names of six fellers what chipped in an' give you a quarter."

"It's a lie!" Skinney cried desperately.

"You're the one what's doin' the lyin'; an' we'll prove it before very long."

Then, Jake continued the charges, referring frequently to the paper, lest he should make a mistake. "The next time you went away was to Jersey City, an' you said the fellers did n't give a cent; but that boy what shines in front of Taylor's Hotel told me he an' two or three more anteed up a nickel,—that's the time when you swelled on the hoss-car, I s'pose. The first trip to Williamsburg you brought back five cents; an' here's the names of two what gave that much apiece."

Skinney could no longer make any reply, so terrified was he; but the cloud had begun to leave Baldy's face.

He fancied the charges which the members of the Union were making, referred only to the Boss Walker; and he resumed his pompous manner as he said sternly:

"If Skin Jones has been stealin', we'll take it outer his head. Why did n't you tell me this thing was bein' hunted up?"

"You overhauled him, an' when he give a long yarn 'bout Tim Bagley, you settled down that it was all right; so us fellers thought we'd find out before sayin' anything more."

"Did n't he tell the straight story 'bout Tim?" Baldy asked, with an excitement that was not feigned; for the thought that Skinney would steal money he had been depending upon for his own support made him very angry.

"We'll come to that part of it in a minute," Jake said, as he again referred to the paper. "When the Boss Walker got back from Williamsburg last night, he brought thirty-one cents; an' I've seen four fellers

what 'll stick to it he got forty-one. That 's the kind of an officer he is; an' we've been sich fools as to feed him while he stole our money. Sim, did you find Tim Bagley?"

"Yes; he 's hidin' in the post-office. Wait a minute, an' I 'll bring him over."

Not a word was spoken, from the time Sim started off at full speed, until he returned with the witness, and then the story of Skinney's defalcation was as complete as it could be without a confession from the culprit himself.

On being questioned, Tim stated positively that he had never paid or loaned Master Jones nine cents; neither had he had any business transactions with him whatever. He said he met Skinney on the previous day, and was offered by him a nickel to tell he had paid this alleged debt; but he refused.

Tim had nothing more to say; and Jake asked, as he turned to Baldy, —

"What d' yer think 'bout it now?"

"He stole the money, of course; an' what 'll we do with him?"

"We 'll leave that for you to say," Jake replied; and Master Higgs was his old self once more, for there could no longer be a chance the strikers had any complaint against him, otherwise he would not have been called upon to sentence the culprit.

"S'posen we take away what money he 's got, an' then thump the life outer him till he can't stand?" Baldy suggested.



THE BOSS SHINER PUNISHING HIS ASSISTANT.

"This Union has done poundin' enough, 'cordin' to my way of thinkin'," Sim said. "Let's take the cash an' settle it that way; he'll have it as rough as he can stand, after this."

"That won't do at all!" Baldy replied emphatically. "What he stole b'longs to all hands; an' he oughter ketch it mighty lively."

"He won't git it from us," Jake said, as he began to search the trembling Skinney; and, after taking sixteen cents from his pockets, added, "Wait here till we git through all our business, an' then you'd better skip quick; for some of the fellers may wantter settle their own accounts."

"If you are fools enough to let him go like this, I won't!" Baldy cried angrily, as he began to pommel the unresisting boy; and no one interfered.

All waited patiently until the Boss Shiner should mete out his brother officer's punishment, that they might see him in turn called to answer for his misdeeds.

CHAPTER XV.

THE AVENGERS.

It seemed very much as if Baldy Higgs was trying to wipe out some old score, when he punished his brother officer for theft.

Skinney was too greatly frightened to be able to lift a finger in self-defence; perhaps he thought resistance would provoke harder blows. He sat shielding his face with his arms, while the Boss Shiner struck savagely at the upper portion of his body, ceasing only when he was too tired to exert himself any further.

"There!" he exclaimed breathlessly, as he turned to the visitors, who had been viewing the scene with the keenest interest, "that's the way we treat fellers what do anything to break up the Union. I'll thump him every time he comes where I am; an' if he gits a job in this town agin, it'll be 'cause I ain't the Boss Shiner."

"Are you through with him?" Jake asked, as he looked at the presiding officer curiously; and the boys moved more closely together, in anticipation of the satisfactory task which was to follow.

"I reckon he's had enough this time; an' now if these fellers wanten join, they can pay their five cents," Baldy replied, as he seated himself on the back of the bench, where he could look down upon the deposed Walker.

"S'posen you wait till we fix up all the business," Jake said quietly. "Then p'rhaps they won't wanten pay anything."

"Ain't you through yet?" Baldy cried, in surprise, a troubled look coming over his face as he spoke.

"Not quite. We've got a idee that we'd like to know how much money you took in since you've been the Boss Shiner of this Union?"

"How much?" Master Higgs repeated. "What d'yer mean by that?"

"Jest what I say. All hands of us have got to know before you can leave this spot."

Baldy glanced about in astonishment; and then, as his eyes fell upon the sobbing Skinney, he began to think perhaps he had fallen into a trap by punishing his brother officer so severely.

"How can I tell right off? It's come in all along; an' I have n't got the count with me. Wait till termorrer mornin', an' I'll have it wrote out for you."

"I reckon you'll have to do the best you can now; for you don't leave here till the thing is settled;" and Jake spoke so decidedly that Baldy understood there was no escape.

He looked around wistfully, as if hoping some friendly policeman might be near; but not so much as a brass button could be seen, and he said sulkily:

"I don't remember anything about it."

"Then I'll have to help you;" and again Jake referred to his slip of brown paper. "In the first place, thirty-three fellers joined, an' paid five cents apiece, — that's

a dollar sixty-five. Then Skinney turned in fifty-two cents; an' you gave him twenty for expenses. You stole, or made us do it for you, a nickel from Jet Blake, twenty-eight cents offer Jippy Simpson, besides not givin' Denny Drake anything outer what he earned. The fellers from Jersey City paid a couple of dimes; an' you scooped seven dollars an' forty cents what the crowd brought back yesterday, but give up two-sixty of it. 'Cordin' to my way of countin', you've had a little over seven dollars; 'an we wanter know where it is?"

"S'posen it's in my pocket?" Baldy asked defiantly.

"If it is, you're goin' to whack up among the crowd; an' then we'll let you run the Union all by yourself."

"I'm the Boss Shiner, an' won't do anything of the kind," Master Higgs cried, with one determined effort to stand on his dignity.

"It don't make any difference who you are," Jake said sternly. "We're here to know 'bout that money; an' the quicker you flash it up, the sooner you'll git away."

"Of course Skinney an' me had to pay for our livin' out of it; 'cause we was the officers," Baldy said, with a whine.

"That can't be very much. Did you spend money for anything 'cept grub?"

"Not a cent," Baldy replied promptly, and trying to assume a look of innocence.

"Who paid for the theatre tickets?" Jake asked slowly.

"Tickets?" Master Higgs repeated, in well-feigned bewilderment; and then, as if suddenly remembering, he cried, "Oh, Skinney got them!"

"No, I did n't either," Master Jones said, as he sat upright and looked his superior officer full in the face. "You bought 'em, same's you did the peanuts."

Baldy no longer attempted to make any denial, and now understood it would be useless to defy his brother strikers.

They knew perfectly well how he had squandered the funds belonging to the association; and he realized that he must take whatever punishment should be meted out to him.

"Let's see how much you've got left," Jake said; and, without a word of remonstrance, Master Higgs turned his pockets inside out, allowing the pennies and silver to fall upon the ground.

It was some moments before the boys could gather up and count the money; and then it was learned that the Boss Shiner had misappropriated all the funds save two dollars and seventy cents.

"What'll we do with it?" Sim asked, as he held the collection of small coins in his cap.

"Give Jippy Simpson an' Jet Blake what we took from them; an' whack up the rest with all hands, countin' in the fellers who was turned out," one of the party suggested; and the others agreed without argument.

While the boys were dividing the funds, wrapping carefully in paper the shares belonging to the ex-members, Master Higgs stood leaning against the bench, watching every movement, and on the alert for an opportunity to make his escape.

"Now what'll we do with Baldy?" some one asked.

"He served Skinney pretty rough; an' it's too bad not to give him a little of his own medicine."

A stormy discussion ensued as to what punishment should be given the boy who had been so cruel to others; and there was such a diversity of opinions among the members that the question promised to be a difficult one to settle.

Some thought he should be held while Skinney was allowed to whip him as much as he pleased.

Others proposed to tie him securely, that each member might administer one solid blow; and the rest were eager to send for Jippy, Denny, and Jet, in order that they should inflict a proper punishment.

It was while every striker was giving vent to his opinions at the full strength of his lungs, making an uproar which caused the pedestrians on the sidewalk to look around as if half expecting a crowd of wild men had been let loose, that the number of the party was suddenly increased by three.

Jippy Simpson, Joe Dowd, and Denny Drake were the new-comers; and they marched into the park in a stern, determined way, as if bent on very serious business.

That they were surprised by the scene of confusion could be told from the expression on their faces; and Jake hastened to explain what had occurred, saying, as he concluded,—

"Now we've made him shell out, it puzzles us to know what we oughter do with the villain."

"I'll tell you," Jippy said quickly. "We come for

him, an' would 'a' took him, no matter whether the Union was runnin' or not. Let us have Bald Higgs an hour; an' then you can fix him up to suit yourselves."

"What are you goin' to do with him?" Jake asked curiously.

"We'll tell you some other time," Jippy replied; "but we're in a hurry now, an' can't stop to talk."

"If the other fellers are willin', go ahead," Jake said; and the remainder of the party readily agreed that Jippy and his friends could take possession of the ex-Boss for as long a time as might suit their purpose.

Baldy exhibited the most lively signs of fear, as he saw those whom he had wronged approaching; and when he learned they were to carry him away, his terror was so great as to be pitiful.

"I won't go! I won't go!" he screamed, as he struck out with hands and feet, to prevent Jippy and Joe from coming near him. "You can thump me if ye want; but I ain't goin' to leave this place!"

Neither of the boys stopped to argue the matter.

They had come determined to take Master Higgs away, whatever opposition might be met with; therefore his protests were unheeded.

They seized him by the arms with no gentle force; and Joe said savagely, as he pulled him along, —

"If you hold your tongue, an' come quiet, nobody will so much as lift a finger; but if you're goin' to kick, it'll be mighty tough on you."

"Where are you takin' me?" Baldy screamed, his face actually livid with fear.



THE STRIKERS TAKING BALDY TO SAM CARLETON'S.

"You'll see after a while," Jippy replied gravely; "but all you need to know now is that you won't be hurt."

"Don't bother to bring him back," Jake cried, as the three boys, with their prisoner, left the park. "We ain't got any room for that kind of a duffer, so keep him till next winter, an' use him for a valentine."

The strikers set up a great shout at this proposition to make Baldy of some service to the public; and the last the ex-Boss heard from the Union he had formed, was the derisive laughter which rose on the air long after the members of the association were lost to view in the distance.

Jippy and Joe marched their prisoner swiftly on in the direction of Sam's home, Denny following closely behind to prevent him from lagging; and it was not until Baldy saw the house toward which he was being hurried that he again attempted to make any protest.

"I won't go in there!" he screamed, trying to hang back, but being energetically pushed forward by Master Drake. "You're carryin' me where Sam Carleton will jest about kill me!"

"He won't do anything of the kind," Jippy said sharply. "He can't get out of bed, on account of the poundin' you give him; and I don't believe he'll so much as look at sich a miserable thing as you be."

"Then what *are* you goin' to do?" and Baldy continued to struggle, but quite as uselessly as before, until his guards had literally dragged him into the hall-way.

"We're goin' to take you where you'll see what the Union has done," Joe replied, as he shook his prisoner

roughly, to make certain he understood what was being said. "If you keep quiet, an' don't so much as say a word, you shall come out the same as when you went in; but a single yip while we're here, an' you'll be mighty sorry."

The boys looked so solemn, and Joe's words sounded so mysterious, that Master Higgs was absolutely awed into silence.

He walked up the stairs readily, and was conducted to Sam's room, where he could see his victim lying helplessly upon the bed, still closely enveloped in bandages.

"There's the feller you most killed, so's you could keep up the strike," Jippy said sternly. "You knew his sister was dyin', an' that all the money his mother could git was what he earned; but jest the same you pounded him, 'cause he could n't join the Union. There's Jet, whose last cent you took when he had no place to sleep or nothin' to eat, while you was livin' high offer his cash an' what had been earned for a sick girl. That's the way you was willin' to git stuff to swell on, while makin' b'lieve help other fellers to their rights. Bring him in here," Jippy added, in a voice trembling with emotion, as he opened the door leading to an adjoining room.

Baldy offered no resistance, but moved slowly on with his stern guards, until he was where he could see a table, on which stood a tiny coffin.

"Sam's sister Alice is in there," Jippy continued, speaking very low and solemn. "She was sick, an' he doin' his best to buy medicine for her, when you smashed

his box, an' fixed him so 's he could n't work. The twenty-eight cents you took from me was her's, or, what 's the same thing, I had that much toward payin' for a doctor. She's dead now, Baldy, died the very night you an' your Union stole the money she needed, an' you an' Skinney went to the theatre with it. Now, we're through; go where you want, an' remember what you've seen when you're thinkin' of startin' another strike."

The ex-Boss left the room, looking even more terrified than when he entered; and Joe said, as the door closed behind him: —

"I hope it 'll be a good while before he gits over feelin' ashamed of hisself."

The strike had ended with the downfall of the Union's officers; and the lesson learned by all who participated in it was one which may be of benefit to them in later years when they have more power to work injury to others.

At all events, it is not likely to be repeated by the present generation of boot-blacks; and those who succeed them are respectfully requested to read carefully the history of the great strike of 1892, as here reported, that they may realize how many people can be wronged in the attempt to gain a fancied right for one.

THE END.





